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THE EVOLUTION OF THE
ENGLISH NOVEL



THE EVOLUTION OF THE ENGLISH NOVEL

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THE EVOLUTION OF THE ENGLISH NOVEL

CHAPTER I

THE EVOLUTION OF THE NOVEL

IN every discussion of tendencies the term *evolution* claims a place with almost the insistence of a prescriptive right. No other term localizes the phenomena so definitely, and conveys so promptly the notion of progress in a general line of tendency. Nevertheless, I think most of us would, if we could, rather avoid the term than insist upon it in literary discussion. For the use of the word *evolution* seems to involve a very elaborate theory. In the title of this chapter—The Evolution of the Novel—the idea suggested indicates that we can name the earlier forms out of which the true novel has been evolved; can arrange

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the novels in existence to illustrate the later development; and can trace the steps of the progress. It is with some reluctance that I have used such a demanding title. Development in literature, easy to suggest as a probable law, easy to infer in respect to particular forms, is extremely difficult of demonstration when the great movements are under consideration. Literature as a whole does not exhibit the regular and sequential development which a theory of literary evolution would imply. It is quite true that in minor matters, especially in tracing the growth of literary ideas, one easily reaches suggestive results. For example, we may find in the "Divine Comedy" of Dante the completed form of a literary method common in the Middle Ages. In the "Inferno" we have a Vision; we can look back and find the "Vision of St. Paul" and other visions to which this one of Dante may be said to be a legitimate sequel. Dante visits Hell under guidance, and views it from a bridge. In an earlier vision Ferseus visits Hell, led by an angel; and in the "St. Patrick's Purgatory"

Tundale visits Hell, has a guide, and views the lake and valley from a bridge. We have an example of the development of a method. So if we consider Milton's "Paradise Lost," we can go back and find legendary additions to the Scripture, then Avitus, then Cædmon, then Andreini, then Milton. Undoubtedly we have in Milton a developed presentation of some of the external scenic accessories found in these earlier works; and perhaps we have a development of the main thought sufficiently connected to make an historical study of these preceding works, with a provisional theory of evolution in mind, valuable for the study of Milton's "Paradise Lost." So with Bunyan. We read the "Pilgrim's Progress," as a completed form; we go back and find the allegorical journeys of Raoul de Houdan in the thirteenth century; we find the *Pèlerinage de l'âme* of Guillaume de Deguileville in the fourteenth century; we find the English translation—"The Pylgremage of the Sowle"—in the next century; and illustrations of the development seem to be quite at hand. Yet the very enumeration of these suggestive cases

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brings to our minds rather the difficulty than the satisfactoriness of a theory of evolution in literature. For certainly there is something vastly greater, more complete, in the "Pilgrim's Progress" than in the earlier "Pilgrimage of the Soul"; there is something greater in Milton's "Paradise Lost" than in Avitus, in Cædmon, in Andreini combined; and there is something greater, perhaps we may say something entirely new, inexplicably more important, in Dante's "Inferno" than in the "St. Patrick's Purgatory," or the "Vision of Ferseus," or the "Vision of St. Paul." The theory of an evolution, even with such excellent examples as these to illustrate it, seems less than satisfactory.

With much more emphasis we can say that any theory of evolution suggests difficulties if we apply it to larger matters than single works. In poetry one would perhaps expect that the early poems recorded in history would be weak, formless, vague, a chaos of ideas in a mist of expression, without form and void. Yet we go back to the earliest Hebraic work in poetry, and it is the Book of Job, as

complete and universal in its application, as correct in its form, as if it had been written in this nineteenth century; we go back to very early Greek literature, and we have the poems of Homer. We should have some difficulty in establishing a theory of the development of poetry, if we undertook to trace it in an ascending series from the works of the great poets of Greece up to the works of the crowned, or even of the uncrowned, poet laureates of to-day. Even if we take a specific form of poetry, such as an epic, can we establish a proposition of the evolution of the epic from a vague, formless, chaotic *Iliad*, an *Odyssey*, or an *Aeneid*, up to a complete nineteenth century epic? If we extend our theory and say that the epic has developed out of its completed form into a new and larger form of poetic expression, what is that expression? Can we say that the epic was a stage in poetic evolution preparatory for and leading to a greater method?

We may have a theory of an evolution of the drama. Possibly such a theory of development would suggest that the drama should begin with simple domestic portrayals, such

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as "She Stoops to Conquer," "The Rivals," or "Rip Van Winkle"; should go on to more complex and more intense presentations; and finally should, in Titanic manner, present the great problems of life and death in the drama of this evolved and later age. But in fact Æschylus stands first, grander than our theory, nobler than our conception. Suppose, still further, that we accept Æschylus as a beginning of a drama and look thence down the ages for an evolution of the drama. What do we find? Five hundred years later than Æschylus we have a weak imitation of the Titanic drama of Greece; a thousand years later than these we have the Miracle Plays of England and France, the very crude, formless, simple dramatic work that we should have expected to have stood fifteen hundred years before; and a few hundreds of years later than these we have Shakespeare, with no dramatic past in England, no dramatic evolution, no literary history,—simply Shakespeare, outside, apparently, of any completed scheme of literary development.

Still again, consider the poet, the seer, the far-eyed man. If literary evolution be easy to set

forth, where shall we find this revealing poet? At the end? In the later years, shall we not? But in fact he comes before the day of literary history. He is Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel. I do not present these things as in any sense an argument against the possibility of a setting forth of any theory of development, of evolution; least of all do I say these things as a denial that such a theory of evolution is probable, or that the discovery of its law is beyond our power. I say them to encourage a certain modesty in the consideration of this question, and to suggest to myself a certain lack of dogmatic utterance in the promulgation of any theory of evolution of the novel, and the exploitation of the steps of its development. The things of the mind are not easy to set down in scientific and logical order. We at best but search for the underlying law and get such hints as we can toward its statement.

In these chapters I do not undertake to show that the novel has grown out of any preceding form of literature with such precision that the traces of its growth can be shown. It is extremely doubtful if we can yet work out

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a perfect statement of the development of the novel out of any other form of literature ; it is doubtful if we can work out any chronological sequence even within the period — the one hundred and fifty years — of the novel's life in English literature to the present day. We cannot say that the novels of 1740 legitimately developed into the novels of 1780 ; that the novels of 1780 logically developed into the novels of 1820 ; that the novels of 1820 legitimately and regularly developed into the novels of 1850. As with poetry, with literature, with the drama, with the epic, we find ourselves confronted with the operation of the human mind expressing itself in forms antedating, or postdating the theoretical stages ; expressing itself often in forms greater, expressing itself sometimes in forms much less, in importance than any theory would demand.

Nevertheless, we have to do in the English novel with a kind of literature separate in method and in extent from other sorts. It belongs to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. [It has a character of its own ; it is limited in extent ; it is specific in its selection

of subject and in its method of treatment.] In such a limited field the study of a development, if possible anywhere, may be carried on with reasonable prospects of success. Granting the difficulty, it is yet more than probable that we can find, if we take up this limited division of literary expression, and if we study it with something of regularity and system, that certain indications of what may be properly, though not too technically, called a development may be shown; and that the examination of these indications, of these apparent stages of growth, may be useful. In this work I undertake the study of five specific kinds of expression in fiction: the novel of personality, the novel of history, the novel of romance, the novel of purpose, and the novel of problem. I take these five divisions in the order in which I have named them, for the reason that it is somewhat the order in which these specific kinds of expression in novel form appeared. The novel of personal life, of individual, separate, domestic life, is the basal form. [A novel is a record of emotion; the story of a human life touched

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with emotion ; the story of two human lives under stress of emotional arousal ; the story of domestic life with emotion pervading it ; the story of a great historical character in his day of aroused emotional activity ; or the story of the romantic adventures of some person seeking strange regions under stress of emotional desire. So that the novel of personal life is really the basal form of the novel, and one may say that all novels become novels only when each is the story of some life stirred by some emotion. The earliest and the latest novel will come under this main division, to the discussion of whose characteristics the second chapter is given. The historical and the romantic novel, which are the subjects of the third and fourth chapters, developed later as a special form ; and the novel of purpose later than either. In treating these in successive chapters I am, then, following somewhat a law of chronological appearance ; but I by no means suggest that the novel of the domestic life, of the individual life, developed into the historical novel, and that again into the romantic novel,

and that again into the novel of purpose, and that again into the problem novel. One must look farther than to this rough and general classification if he seeks to frame a law of the development of fiction.

We have seen that it is not easy to set forth in detail any order of succession of literary forms of expression. Yet I think he is but a superficial student of the literature of recorded time who does not note one tendency of later work, of later method, of later procedure, of later life, as compared with earlier work, earlier method, earlier procedure, and earlier life which seems to imply an underlying law. If there be such an underlying law, it is the purpose of this chapter to suggest it and to apply it with some exactness to the history of the novel form. This law of tendency is, in general, that the depiction of the external, objective, carnal, precedes, in every form of expression of which we can have records, the consideration of the internal, the subjective, the spiritual. We go from shapes, and forms, and bulk, and externals, to the presentation of

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the life within. To illustrate this law, I may call attention to a step in the development of art significant of the evolution of the idea of inner personality as opposed to outward symbol, which seemed to show itself in the last years of the Mediæval Ages, and the first years of the Reformation era. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, in the day of Cimabue, of Quintin Massys, of Van Eyck, the typical presentation of the Madonna was that of a vague face, without expression, shone upon by a light from without, illumined and dignified by an external halo. The Madonna of the later time, of the greater time, was a human face, with human expression, illumined and glorified by a light from within. The halo, the external sign, had gone ; the inner life, the expression of the divinely aroused human emotion, had come in its place. This seems to be in accordance with a law that the progress of evolution is from external embellishment to inner life. It is this law that I propose in this work to apply to the novel.

The theory of development that I set forth is that progress, in speech, in literature, in

methods religious, educational, and political, in theories of the relation of the individual to his life work and life duty, has always been from the expression of the external form, from the consideration of the external characteristics, from the suggestion of the external remedies for evils and rewards for endeavor, to the expression of the abstract thought beneath the external form, to the consideration of the internal character which finds embodiment in the external characteristics, to study into the causes of evils, and to the satisfaction of the soul with duty done in place of external reward of endeavor. It is a progress that advances from the physical to the intellectual, from the carnal to the spiritual. I shall endeavor to apply this theory to the novel with intent to suggest that such development of expression as we find in form of novels advances from the depiction of far-off occurrences and adventures to the narration and representation of contemporaneous, immediate, domestic occurrences ; and, finally, to the presentation of conflicts of the mind and soul beneath the

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external manifestations. If the theory is true, we may expect to find at the beginning of novel-expression a wild romance, and at its end an introspective study into motive.

First, then, for the theory. The earliest speech of any people, the earliest speech of the Indian, of the savage, is a picture story. It is hardly probable that the Indian speeches familiar to our boyhood's days from the records of the "Boy's Own Speaker," are exact transcripts of the utterances of the chiefs around the war-party camp-fire two hundred years ago; but they are veracious in one respect,—the voice of the utterance is external. An Indian's speech is a series of pictures, of illustrations, of external representations of his ideas. He sees a happy hunting-ground, a great spirit. He lays the implements of the dead warrior by him in the grave; he makes visible images which he can touch, feel, handle, for the embodiment of his ideas. So the early primitive nation worships a visible God,—a sun, a totem, a joss, an idol. So primitive peoples personify phases of nature into nymphs, spirits,

and fairies. It is the later day which gives the power to see, to speak, to think directly without the visible image, without the symbol, without the external form. It is an indication of progress in intellectual as well as mathematical excellence, when the boy ceases visibly to touch his actual fingers as he counts. And as in spoken speech, so also in recorded speech. It is no accident that the epic stands at the beginning of poetic life and that in modern days the epic has passed away; for the epic is the most objective, the most external, the most physical of all forms of poetic expression. With the complexity of modern life, if this theory of progress from the outward to the inward, from the external to the internal, from the objective to the subjective, is true, we might expect the passing of the epic, as it has passed. Or, again, if we interrogate folklore, one may note one characteristic of the tales of folklore which are dearest to the hearts of all peoples, and this characteristic is that the stories most loved are stories of the physically largest and most perfect, overthrown and defeated by

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the weaker, by the less physically great, by the more intellectually potent. The folklore story is always of the one physically strong overthrown by the one weak in body but strong in intellect and spirit. It is always the giant killed by the insignificant Jack ; it is always the fire-breathing dragon killed by the saintly knight ; it is always Grendel destroyed by Beowulf ; it is always Brer Fox outwitted by Brer Rabbit. The external, the forceful, the physically massive, is overcome, defeated, by the physically weak, but the more intellectual, the more spiritual. If this be a law, we may look to find, as we study the novel, that it begins with the presentation of the external phases of life ; finds the impulse of its action in compulsions from without, in accidents, incidents, catastrophes ; takes its motive from the external. And we may find, if the theory is a true one, that the study of the romantic novel, or the historical novel, or the novel of domestic life, becomes a study of progress toward the depiction of the relation of man to man, taking the impulse of its action and its motive from the aroused

desire in the mind or heart of its hero. Fiction begins with the objective novel; it progresses into the introspective and the subjective novel.

All this will follow if the theory is true. But it is worth while, in enunciating so far-reaching and apparently so arbitrary a proposition, to illustrate it still farther. I may, no doubt, find suggestion of it in very trifling matters close at hand even better than in more serious ones. It was but a few years ago that the engines on our railroads glittered in brass adornments; the bell, the water tank, the signal light, and the rails, shone like gold. There was a great outcry when the late Commodore Vanderbilt ordered all these engines to appear in plain black paint. It was argued that the love of the engineer for his engine, the pride in it, would pass with the passing of the glittering external. It did not. The excellence was inside, and the removal of the halo did not diminish the admiration of the driver for his engine. Or I may name the passing of certain details of the external on the stage. In one of the Miracle Plays, Adam is repre-

sented crossing the stage, going to be created. The imagination needed its visible symbol. Similarly there are ghosts in the Elizabethan plays. In Shakespeare's time there was a visible physical ghost, possibly with the "invisible" coat of the Middle Ages,—a remarkable garment through the donning of which an actor could become, as it were, conspicuously invisible,—more likely a visible ghost, boldly expressed, with no disguise. But since Shakespeare's day we have progressed beyond the need of this physical symbol of the vanished spirit hovering for an instant on the confines betwixt life and death, and to us the externally manifested ghost has come to seem too close a personation. The later stage managers have tried various devices to spiritualize, to decarnalize, this ghost presentation; they have tried mirror reflections, illusions. But it was Henry Irving in the presentation of Macbeth who gave the modern thought. The ghost of Banquo is present in Shakespeare's play; but on the stage, as Henry Irving presents Macbeth, there is no ghost of Banquo; there is merely the empty chair and a light on the empty chair of Banquo.

So we have come from the exhibition of an external form to the suggestion of the subtler thought beneath. For though no modern dramatist would ever introduce a ghost in writing a drama, and no modern novelist would ever make a ghost a real character in a serious novel, yet we think of these unthinkable things, we ponder on these spiritual problems in our plays and in our novels no less intently than did our anthropomorphic ancestors. We think and ponder only the more intently because unhampered by the external symbol. The visible ghost no longer walks the boards of our stage, nor stalks through the reveries of our imaginations ; but the mystery of death, of life, of life extending beyond the visible death, is none the less a problem in our plays, in our novels, and in our meditations. It is but the external manifestation which has passed.

It has passed, too, in things very much greater than the speech of Indian, or the method of poetic expression, or the decoration of engines, or the portrayal of Madonnas, or the exhibition of incorporeal visions on the stage. The thought of sin cannot be said to be a modern

thought ; but it is only since the Reformation that repentance for sin has come to be a matter of spiritual exercise. We need go back only one thousand years to find that the religious exercise of repentance for sin committed demanded external observance as its essential. It was not alone the king who did penance for his people's sin in public, or led a Crusade as a religious rite ; it was a universal proposition of religious procedure that penitence was a public function which involved penitential observances, external fastings, mortifications of the external flesh, removal from the shows of external social life, departure from the occupations of the external world, pilgrimages to shrines, to Meccas, to that Canterbury Cathedral in which lay the bones of the martyred Thomas à Becket. Penitence was to be expressed by some external observance, visible to the eye, painful to the flesh. It is a modern thought that penitence is a private duty ; it is a modern thought that it demands contrition instead of external observance as its essential ; that it concerns the sinner and is, perhaps, most sincere when least visibly manifested. The progress is from the

requirement of objective external forms of atonement, of repentance, to the exercises of the individual soul. So far as this indicates a law, it would indicate that in the earlier method of the romantic novel, of the historical novel, of the novel of life, we should have the external phases of the historical day, of the romantic adventure, of the life procedure ; and that in later stages we should have the relations of man to the historical day, we should have the subtler, the less physical, aspects of the romantic life, of the domestic life, portrayed.

But not alone is such a tendency as I have indicated evidenced in religious observances. It is even more easily recognized in educational and in political methods. Students of the educational tendencies of the last one hundred years have no doubt noted that the motive force upon the student has shifted in the last seventy years from an external to an internal compulsion. The college of seventy years ago was an absolute monarchy ; the student was intellectually handled, mastered, disciplined, prepared, by an educational force, in the selec-

tion of which, toward the influencing of which, in the modelling of which, he had absolutely no choice. A faculty set for him certain required studies, to be pursued at certain stated times, to be evidenced by recitations, to be guaranteed by examinations at certain fixed periods under unchangeable rules and regulations. There was no election, no option, no opportunity of individual choice given the student. It was a compulsion from an external. Such was the system in our colleges — even in Harvard College — seventy years ago. Under such a system as this most excellent men were trained, and trained most excellently. There may be some who will maintain that we have not wholly gone toward perfection in education, as we have in modern times given, more and more, the voice of the determination of his college career to the student. I do not argue this point; I merely point out that the college of to-day has gone from a method of education by which the student was dominated from beginning to close by a force external to himself, to a system in which the student's own desire, the student's

own choice, the student's own private notion, is in his case the keynote of procedure. And I am sure that this change from the external power modelling the boy, to the boy's own desire controlling his development, is a change in accordance with the theory I have been presenting — that evolution proceeds from the dominance of the external toward the preëminence and the potency of the immanent idea.

And in like manner, our days have seen a similar progress of the notion of political headship from the external, objective symbol to the dominance of the invisible idea. The earliest kings were kings by virtue of force. The largest man, the man with the strongest arm, with the muscle of iron, with the nerves of steel — was the first king. He was an objective manifestation of physical power. That is the first stage in the king-notion. The second stage is of to-day, in England let us say, where the king or queen is but the symbol of a power — without force, almost without influence — the inactive physical symbol of the power of the state. In more modern community systems men will not admit that

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they have a king at all. If a Democratic leader or a Republican leader rules the politics of a State, he rules it, not by displaying, but by concealing, the fact that he is a king — a political king — a “boss.” In our government of the United States can it least of all be said that he who stands as President stands as king. The real ruler of these seventy millions of people is an intangible, immaterial, invisible force called “public opinion.” Before the breath of that unembodied idea the physical force of a political boss, of a Congress, of a President, bows. The external yields to the internal, the physical to the mental and the spiritual.

If such examples as I have given are not sufficient, I can easily add to their number. I can, for example, suggest how the notion of individual personal liberty, in religious matters, in political matters — of liberty untrammelled by any external force, of liberty dominated only by the mind, the heart, the conscience — is a modern, an evolved, a developed idea. Or I can point out that a hint of all the suggestions that I have been

making has been given in revelation, in the fire, the thunder, the lightnings, the tablets of stone when the first Commandments came; in the voice saying that "a little child shall lead them," that "except ye become as little children," and that "ye must be born again," uttered when came the New Commandments. The fire, the thunder, the lightnings passed, but God was in the still, small voice. And I may finally claim that a further suggestion can be found in the prophecy that in the world to come the body shall cease, and the spirit be alone the living force. I do not give these examples as proofs. I desire only to use such illustrations as are near at hand in making clear this suggestion of a general habit of progress in evolution. If true as respects the novel, we may expect to find a tendency away from external manifestations and toward the presentation of the motive beneath such manifestations,—away from the manifestation of the objective, the physical, from the picturing of a thoughtless hero dashing about through forests and over streams to rescue or to kill other individuals.

as unspiritual, as unintellectual as himself,—toward the study and the depiction of the internal relations of men and women in daily life. It is with illustrations such as these that I formulate a proposition concerning the novel in its growth to completeness: that, earlier than its appearance in the works of Richardson, Fielding, Smollett, and Sterne, in the decade of 1740 to 1750, we may find romances and chivalric tales of men on horseback ranging through strange countries; we may find romances of adventures, stories of wanderings and seekings through far lands; and that at a much later date, as typical of the most advanced thought of a later day, we may find novels of the soul, of the mind, introspective studies into the motives which move hearts and influence lives.

Let us then turn from theory to history and study the fact. When we interrogate the history of the true novel we find it a most recent literary form. A novel is a narrative of human life under stress of emotion. It differs from the epic in that it is a narration of human rather than superhuman life, under

stress of ordinary rather than of excessive or heroic emotion. It differs from the drama in that the latter represents clashes and conflicts of emotion rather than a life procedure under influence of emotion, and represents in action rather than in narrative. In English speech, though not in German and French usage, the term novel is used as a general expression to include all prose fiction; the romance and the story being thus names of types and classes of novels; the term novel being the generic, the term romance and story being the especial, designation. In German usage a sharp distinction is drawn between the term *Novelle* and *Roman*, the latter being, as in the French, the general term corresponding to novel in English. In English usage the "story" is that form of novel which gives an action of life or a sequence of events of life with least possible complexity of emotion; and the "romance" is that form of novel which portrays a life when influenced by emotion to undertake material, spiritual, or physical exploration into regions unfamiliar. In English fiction the type form is the novel, and the novel

in English literature was born in 1740 when appeared the "Pamela" of Richardson. It had predecessors rather than ancestors in English writings. Before it, had appeared Defoe's "Robinson Crusoe," which was a story of adventure arousing emotional interest, though itself but slightly touched with emotion. And earlier had appeared four works commonly cited by chroniclers as having in them enough of the quality of the English novel to warrant their position in a list of its predecessors. These four works were: Nash's fantastic narration of adventure called "The Unfortunate Traveller," which was printed in 1594; Lyly's "Euphues," which was really a handbook of court etiquette rather than a novel; and the altogether charming pastoral romances, — too delicate in tone, too vague in method, to be called novels, — the "Rosalind" of Thomas Lodge and the "Arcadia" of Philip Sidney. In these works I have given all the important predecessors of the novel in English literature. They can, I think, with but slight justice be termed its ancestors. In German literature for the same period I should name but three:

— the German translation, published in 1569, of the “Amadis of Gaul”; *Der Abenteuerliche Simplicius Simplicissimus* of Grimmelshausen, 1668; and the Robinson Tales of 1720. In French literature for the same period I should name: *La Princesse de Clèves* of Madame de la Fayette, 1677, the *Gil Blas* of Lesage, 1715–1735, the *Marianne* of Marivaux, 1731–1736, which antedated “Pamela” half a dozen years and, perhaps, suggested it, and the *Manon Lescaut* of the Abbé Prévost, 1729–1733. One may note that the *Manon Lescaut*, the *Marianne*, and the completed form of *Gil Blas* are not only of the same generation but within the same decade as the earliest English novel. The true novel, therefore, appeared almost simultaneously in France and in England, though coming as most literary forms have apparently come, from the more eastern to the more western land.

And yet, while it is true that the decade 1735 to 1745 saw the birth of the novel in both France and England, and while it is true that only three or four predecessors can be found in either German, English, or French

literature, it is not true that we can find no works of fiction in literary history to which the novel may be said to stand in the direct relation of descendant. The novel had its predecessors in at least three groups of works. The short tales found in Greek manuscripts, the composition of which dates from the second to the sixth centuries, and which, collectively, are known as the "Greek Romances," form the first group. The Italian and the Spanish romances of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries form the second group. The prose romances of chivalry, themselves the descendants of the poetic romances of adventure, form the third group. First in time is the Greek romance group. It has come down to us in most fragmentary condition. All that we have of it is evidence, more or less complete, of the existence of eight tales. The first of these is a brief fragment of the first or second century, telling the story of the grief of one Nimrod at parting from a loved one, Derkeia, and telling the efforts of Nimrod to deserve her by valiant conduct in a campaign. The scene

is laid in Nineveh, the language is Greek, the material seems to be Oriental, and the fragment is written on a roll of Egyptian papyrus, proving that even at that early date literature passed the bounds of nationality. The second of these Greek tales is known to us only in the report made six centuries after the tale itself was written, by one Photius of Constantinople. The book itself is called "The Marvellous Things beyond Thule." It is the story of the adventures of one Dinius who met a maiden Dercyllis, and with her and for her underwent marvellous adventures, which included, on his part, an expedition to the North Pole and to the moon, till, finally, they happily returned to Tyre. The third one, which is, like the one just mentioned, of the second century, is known to us also from the account of Photius, and is the *Babylonica* of Jamblichus. It is the story of Sinonis, who, with her husband Rhodanes, flies from the unwelcome suit of Garmus, the king of Babylonia. In their flight they meet with adventures in which they elude their enemies by feigning death, by occupying a

new-made tomb, and by claiming to be ghosts. They exterminate their enemies by prowess impossible here fully to set forth. Misfortunes come upon them ; Sinonis is carried off by a Syrian king, but finally Rhodanes defeats the Syrian king and conquers the Babylonian king, and the book ends, as a fiction should, with Rhodanes possessor of Sinonis, and firmly seated on the Babylonian throne. The next of these fictions, by one Xenophon, is of the third century, and is the first of those we have mentioned that has come down to us in the original text. It is the *Ephesiaca* of Xenophon (so called after the author's native town), and is the story of Anthia and Habrocomas, who, having been wont to scoff at love, meet one day by chance in the temple of Diana at Ephesus. They fall in love, but are doomed by Apollo to suffer and endure till the God of Love shall be appeased. The tale is the story of their travels. It is a narration of remarkable adventures. Of course they lose each other and spend weary years in search, and of course, also, great wonders are wrought ; but in the end, as a

story should, the tale brings them together at Ephesus, where, having been faithful to each other through their perils, they live happily ever after. This pleasing fiction is worthy of note, not alone because of its excellence, but because from it was drafted one of the famous mediæval stories,—“Apol-lonius of Tyre,”—which has come down to us through Gower in his *Confessio Amantis*, and through the Elizabethan play,—some-times called Shakespearian,—of “Pericles, Prince of Tyre.” The next of these is the most celebrated, with perhaps one exception, of the whole number. It is the *Ethiopica* by one Heliodorus. It is the story of Theagenes and Chariclea, and is really a good tale of adventure. The hero and heroine are shipwrecked, saved by a band of robbers, and carried away. They are separated, and the story of the work is the story of the adven-tures of these two, till, at last, in Ethiopia, they come happily to safe union, having not only passed through incredible dangers with marvellous feats of prowess, but having also accomplished a great moral reform in abol-

ishing human sacrifices throughout all Ethiopia. The next story brings us to the fifth century. It is the story of "Clitophon and Leucippe," and is not unlike the others. It is a tale of two lovers who fly from enraged parents by eloping over the sea. They suffer shipwreck, are captured by pirates, and are separated. Then the adventures begin. Clitophon learns of the death of Leucippe and marries a widow; the widow's husband comes back; Leucippe is found, and out of it all comes the most unlikely thing in the world of fact, but the most sensible thing in the world of fiction, the reconciliation of the original lovers. The next of these fictions of adventure is, perhaps, of the sixth century. It is entitled "Chæreas and Callirhoe," and was written by one Chariton. In it the lovers have married, but the husband becomes jealous and kills his wife, as he supposes, and flies, leaving her for dead. The wife is carried to a tomb which robbers break into, and from which, finding her alive, they sell her into slavery. The husband learns this, and the tale records the search for her by this

repentant husband. The last one of these Greek tales that has come down to us is the well-known "Daphnis and Chloe." It is in its form rather a pastoral than a fiction of adventure, and is the simple story of the lovers Daphnis and Chloe and their trials with their rivals and enemies, ending most happily in a joyous wedding festival. Such in briefest form is a description of the eight prose tales which have come down to us from the Greek. They are charming tales, and I trust the brevity of my allusions to them gives no unfavorable impression. But I think any one will note, as he runs through the statement of the plots, that the emotional bond, the thread of love, running through them, is of the slightest possible description. They are stories of external adventure, with a motive of desire, but with detail of fighting, pirates, war, shipwreck, and strategies. If I had been manufacturing evidence to establish a proposition that the ancestor of the modern novel had been a story wholly external, depicting only adventures of the body, of the physical senses, I could have created no better

example of such a theory than the Greek fictions; and they are in truth the earliest predecessors of our modern novel.

The second group of works of fiction, earlier in time than the novel, and in a certain sense related to it, is the group of Italian and Spanish pastorals. The direct connection of the pastoral with the novel is clear though slight; and its history is worth considering here, because the pastoral forms a link between the literature before the revival of learning, and that of the centuries immediately preceding the one that saw the birth of the English novel. The order of descent is from the Eclogues of Vergil and the Latin pastoral, to the Italian pastoral, to the Spanish pastoral, to the English pastoral tale of Sidney. The names one might mention would be Vergil in the first century, Boccaccio in the fourteenth, Sannazaro in the early sixteenth, Montemayor and Sidney in the middle years of the sixteenth century, Honoré D'Urfé in the early seventeenth century. The prose Italian tale of Boccaccio, *L'Ameto* (1341–1342), is a tale of the rural diversions of the hunter Ameto

and the nymph Lia, and of the stories told at the midsummer festival of Venus. It antedates by one hundred and sixty-two years the poetic *Arcadia* of Sannazaro, which is the tale of the wanderings of Ergasto through the Arcadian groves. These two tales sum up the contributions of Italy, in complete form, to the pastoral romances. From Spain we get two works, at least, which deserve mention : Ribeiro's *Menina e Moça* (Girl and Maiden), 1554, and Montemayor's *Diana*, the latter the most famous of all the late mediæval pastoral romances. Ribeiro's work is in prose, and is the story of the loves and misfortunes of the knights Lamentor and Narbindel. It is a story of pastoral life, with a suggestion of grief, affection and melancholy, and with machinery of adventures, misfortunes, romantic episodes, and knight errantry. Montemayor's *Diana* is also a story of unrequited love. Two swains, Sireno, who had loved and lost, and Sylvano, who had loved and never gained, meet Selvagia, who had loved and thrown away, by a brookside ; and forthwith set themselves to tell the story of their loves and sorrows. To

them enter a group of nymphs and a shepherdess, with new tales of disguises, distresses, and adventures ; and all together they set forth on a pilgrimage to the temple of the goddess Diana. On the way they rescue another shepherdess, likewise in grief for the loss of a loved one. Arrived at the temple, the priestess despatches the new shepherdess on a mission of mercy to find her own love and the loved ones of the others. She fills three cups from an enchanted stream and gives to Sireno, Sylvano, and Selvagia, who fall into a sleep from which they awake to happiness, gained through the forgetting, in sleep, of their former affections and the occurrence of new ones, means of gratifying which have been provided by the thoughtful priestess through the mission of the travelling shepherdess. Happiness does not come to all, but rather the atmosphere of melancholy pervades the end of the work ; for although the loved one of Sireno is returned, the potion of the priestess has taken away from Sireno the power of loving, and the book in its ending is a prophecy of the romanticism of a later day.

It may be that the direct connection of these pastoral tales with the English novel is slight. But they vastly influenced the literature of Europe. Sidney's "Arcadia" in English literature looks back to them directly, and itself influenced the later fiction; D'Urfé's *Astrée* in French literature looks back to them, and itself has greatly influenced later fictions. The tearfulness of Richardson's "Pamela," the pathetic emotion of Marivaux's *Marianne*, are akin to the sentimentality of the *Diana* of Montemayor; the *Nouvelle Héloïse* of Rousseau is saturated with this same romantic emotion; and the melancholy of Sireno, whose loved one was another's wife, is again with us in the despair of Werther. The relation of the pastorals of the fifteenth century to the novels of the seventeenth is indirect; it affects the spirit rather than the method; but the melancholy sentimentality of the pastoral tale is the melancholy sentimentality of the early novel. We must certainly consider these tales well when searching for the predecessors of the modern novel.

It is from Spain that we get the pastoral

romance in its finished form; it is from Spain that we get the mediæval romance of chivalry in its finished form. In one sense the romance of chivalry has always been with us, for the *Odyssey* of Homer must be termed a romance of chivalry. The Greek tales are romances of adventure undertaken in chivalrous devotion to an ideal love; the prose tales of Arthur and the poetic songs and lays of the minstrels have as a basis ideal action, and as material romantic adventure. But in coherent form these stories come to us for almost the first time in the Spanish romances — themselves the descendants of Arthurian legends and the minstrel lays — the Spanish romances of the early sixteenth century, notably the *Amadis de Gaula* (1470–1510). I need not tell the story of this romance. It is a heroic tale of the loves, the adventures, the sorrows, the successes, of the knights who are its heroes. It is even now a charming tale, for the recital of the exploits, and the wanderings, and the desperate deeds throws about it the magic atmosphere of the twilight days of the later Middle Ages. Its noble deeds, its noble

thoughts, its magical assistances, which had a charm for man in earlier ages, which had a charm for us in our boyhood years, have a charm for us to-day. All these things had tremendous influence on the novel. Such stories, wrought into form by the artists of a later day, are with us still; such tales we find in Scott, in Dumas, in Stevenson. As with the pastoral, the tracing of a direct line of descent is difficult, but the spirit of these romances of the chivalric deeds of heroes in the past is the spirit of the historical romance of to-day. They are not the novel; but without their influence the true novel might never have come.

They are not the novel. For there came a day when wild stories of the adventures of knights, and kings, and princes; when tales of unreal character, unreal scenes, unreal emotions; when tales of adventure, in lands far away, under circumstances impossible, and with help of enchantment, and magic, and superhuman assistance,—there came a day when the tale of all these external, far-off, glorious unrealities passed away, and in its

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place came the simple story of a humble life, in scenes real, at hand; the story of the emotion of a simple, homely, struggling soul; the story of a Pamela, of a Marianne, of a Manon Lescaut, of a Joseph Andrews, of a Clarissa Harlowe. In the middle years of the eighteenth century there came such a day. When that day came, it was the birthday of the English novel.

CHAPTER II

THE GROWTH OF PERSONALITY IN FICTION

IN the preceding chapter a general theory of development in the manner and the spirit of the novel has been given. It is evident that if this theory has sound basis, the same general law will be manifest in each of the separate novel forms. It should be manifest in the record of the Novel of Personality, of the Novel of History, of the Novel of Romance, of the Novel of Purpose. In this chapter I undertake to study the theory in the history of the Novel of Personality, and try to illustrate it by discussing four novels: Goldsmith's "The Vicar of Wakefield," Miss Austen's "Pride and Prejudice," Charlotte Bronté's "Jane Eyre," and Nathaniel Hawthorne's "Scarlet Letter." It is not important that two of these novels are the work of men and two the work of women, nor is their actual

chronological relation of especial importance, though we may note that they lie in three periods: "The Vicar of Wakefield" having the date 1766 and being illustrative of the spirit of the third quarter of the eighteenth century; "Pride and Prejudice" having the date 1813 and being illustrative of the spirit of the first quarter of the nineteenth century; "Jane Eyre" and the "Scarlet Letter," practically contemporaneous in date, — "Jane Eyre" having the date 1847, and the "Scarlet Letter," 1850. — being illustrative of the spirit of the middle years of the nineteenth century. These things are not specially important for the purpose, nor is it important to note that the three English novels in the list — "The Vicar of Wakefield," "Pride and Prejudice," and "Jane Eyre" — were written by authors who were born in country parsonages, and who came in village rectories to their knowledge of the personal life they depicted. The contributions of the parsonage to the literature of fiction tell a story of patient, earnest observation which these novels might easily be made to illustrate and to which many other

works of fiction bear evidence. But the discussion of that relation is beyond the present intent. Nor is it specially to the purpose to go with much detail into the story of the life of Oliver Goldsmith, of Jane Austen, of Charlotte Bronté, or of Nathaniel Hawthorne, save alone in so far as such study of the life is necessitated if one would note the outcome of that life in expression. But I take these novels, out of all those produced in the one hundred years succeeding that year 1740, in which "Pamela" appeared and in which the true English novel was born, because they seem to me to illustrate two phases of the development of fiction in modern days. They illustrate a development from the novel of the outer life to the novel of the inner life; from the novel of manners, forms, persons, and personages, to the novel of the life struggle of one single individual soul. And they illustrate also the fact that such development, implying, as it does, increasing interest in the individual life, presents the evolution of personality in fiction.

The notion of personality is implied in the

very idea of the novel. Even in the earliest novels, in "Pamela," in *Marianne*, in "Joseph Andrews," in "Tom Jones," in "The Vicar of Wakefield," we find the story of an individual life to some degree separate, to some degree complete of definition. If the novel is a record of the emotion of an individual soul, influenced by and influencing some other soul, one cannot have a novel until some notion of individuality has come into the world. The novel is a modern form of expression; as the notion of individuality, of personality in ordinary life entirely apart from all circumstances, is a very late notion in civilization. The notion of personality is quite unknown in a savage or semi-barbarous condition; it is unusual to-day in half-evolved civilizations. The common people in such countries are scarcely permitted to own an individual life. And as in civilization the complete idea of the value of an individual and even the complete individual name, is slow in development, so in literary expression the complete individual is a very late product. In mediæval legends and stories and romances, we have heroic types

rather than men ; we have ideal personages in the armor of knights, rather than living human beings ; we have embodiments of grace in the robes of queens and ladies fair, rather than real women. Change the names about of any half dozen of the heroes in the *Orlando Furioso*, and the fair ones for whom they fought would scarcely have noticed a change : we have no real individual life presented to us. It is hardly until after the Reformation that we have a trace of recognition of the importance that the individual deserves ; it is hardly until after Shakespeare that we have individuals in the drama. The novel came late into life ; but it could not have come till the mind of man recognized the notion of personality apart from circumstances. In this chapter I endeavor to show the growth of such idea of personality as illustrated in the novels I have named.

I do not need, of course, to go deeply into detail in writing of Oliver Goldsmith or of "The Vicar of Wakefield." The brilliant, improvident, inconsequent Goldsmith — the friend of Johnson, and Boswell, and Garrick ;

the author of "The Good-Natured Man" and "She Stoops to Conquer"; the slave of letters and the master of letters — is a figure too well known to literary history to need exploitation here. Little enough was Goldsmith like his own hero, the Vicar of Wakefield, save only that both were lovable; and in no sense is "The Vicar of Wakefield" an autobiography. It is an imperishable tale of the misfortunes of that compound of wisdom and simplicity, of vanity and unselfishness, of shrewdness and benevolence — the Vicar of Wakefield. Beginning his married life in wealth and prosperity, he feeds the hungry, cares for the weak, and lives with door open to those less favored. But misfortunes come upon him like to those upon the patriarch Job: his property is lost; his daughter runs away to misery; the humbler home to which he has had refuge is destroyed by fire; his son brings debt upon him; he, at last, is sent to prison,—and in it all he remains the calm, the beautiful, the pathetic, the humorous Vicar. He is at once a Sir Roger de Coverley, a Wouter van Twiller, a Pickwick; an embodiment of the qualities of

simplicity and righteousness. Hardly an embodiment one may say. It is rather a suggestion of the qualities than a picture of the person which we get; it is rather as a personage in an allegory—an allegory of virtue pelted by misfortune—than as a person in actual life that the Vicar shows himself to us. The work has little plot; the Vicar shows little development of character. He stands for certain excellences in character and illustrates the resistance to circumstances of an unmoved nature when other natures fail. The misfortunes which come upon him do not come from any act of his and are not remedied by any act of his; external circumstances assault an allegorical figure. It is personality in fiction in its earlier stage.

Beyond a question we take a long step forward in the expression of the novelist's art when we go from this somewhat formless sketch of the Vicar of Wakefield to a complete novel, as written by Jane Austen. I have noted that it is not important for our purposes to observe that nearly half a century elapsed between the publication of "The Vicar of Wakefield," in 1766, and "Pride and Preju-

dice," in 1813. Works in literature are, to a great extent, independent of time-conditions, as they are independent of race-conditions. Moreover, though forty-seven years separated the publication of Goldsmith's work from that of Jane Austen, the interval of creation was really much shorter ; for "Pride and Prejudice" was written about 1797, though, partly because it was illustrative of the spirit of a time in advance of its creation, it waited sixteen years for a publisher. Perhaps the publisher who declined it, who was no other than Cadell, could not believe that the twenty-one-year-old daughter of a country parson, a country girl scarcely of age, who had lived all her life in the little village of Steventon, in North Hampshire, a hamlet so small that perhaps he had difficulty in finding it upon the map of England, could write a novel worth his attention. The life of Jane Austen is an interesting illustration of one of the problems of literature — the problem of the relation of the life to the works of an author. All that we know of her father is that he was the comfortably wealthy rector of Steventon ; all we know of her opportunities

is that they were mainly the opportunities of a country village; her daily life has left so little trace that we can hardly lay our hand upon any record of serious events in its happenings; her personal life has apparently wrought itself into the fibre of but few of the personages in her novels; her novels — as purely objective as the works of Shakespeare — contain no record of the personal, the political, or the religious opinions of the author. We gain little knowledge of Miss Austen from contemporary records, from tradition, or from her novels. Her life was in three periods: twenty-six years, from 1775 to 1801 in the country rectory at Steventon, in which time she wrote the first versions of "Pride and Prejudice," "Sense and Sensibility," and "Northanger Abbey"; eight years, from 1801 to 1809, in Bath and Southampton; eight years in the little village of Chawton, not far from Alton, in which time she wrote her three remaining novels, — "Emma," "Mansfield Park," and "Persuasion." Two of these novels — "Northanger Abbey" and "Persuasion" — were published in 1818, a year after Miss Austen's death.

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The others were published between 1811 and 1816. These brief annals tell most of the story of Jane Austen's life. She was never married; she lived quietly in happy domestic life; it was of her own desire that she knew little of the literary and of the fashionable society of her day. She was a quiet, detached observer of the comedy of human life; she has written for us six almost flawless, immortal novels.

The first of these novels is "Pride and Prejudice," and I take it for this purpose rather because it is the first than because it is preëminently characteristic of the author, or illustrative of the proposition I have named. It is the story of the home life of the family of Mr. Bennet, who lived in circumstances of reputable ease in a village whose limited society the reader comes to know as well as though he had been native born. There is a humorous, whimsical father, a serious, ingenious, designing, but inconsequent, mother, and there are five daughters. The story is of the various happenings as these daughters win their way to settlements in establishments more or less excellent. It

contains an imperishable picture of the high-spirited Elizabeth, who wins at last by virtue of that nobler self-respect which conquers her own baser pride and banishes all prejudice. If I may claim later that this is essentially a novel of outer life rather than a novel of inner life; that it is essentially a novel of form rather than a novel of quality; that it is essentially a novel of personage rather than a novel of character,—I by no means imply that it is no more complete a work of fiction than the “Vicar of Wakefield,” for there is a long step forward in the novelist’s art from Goldsmith to Jane Austen. (“Pride and Prejudice” is an observation of life, though a satirical criticism of its outer phases, rather than a study of any of its problems. It is apparently not written to set forth any proposition of living or to develop any idea of excellence, but simply to portray, impartially, objectively, an existing woman as Jane Austen saw her.) It is a dated society, and it is a dated woman, not the woman of all time, that we have portrayed; but it is a society and a woman portrayed with marvellous per-

fection. In going from "The Vicar of Wakefield" to Jane Austen we have gone from singleness to complexity; for, whereas in "The Vicar of Wakefield" we had sequence of incident, (in "Pride and Prejudice" we have plot, or at any rate an articulation of single incidents, actions, and emotions into a unity of circumstance, action, and emotion.) And if we have in the formation of the plot progress from singleness to complexity, we have this still more in the characters and in the interest excited. "The Vicar of Wakefield" is a quality and a characteristic put in human form: (Mr. Bennet and Elizabeth are persons as complexly organized as each of us believes himself to be.) We have gone a long way toward completeness in the art of the novel when we reach the novel as Jane Austen writes it.

Indeed, if one considers with care, one finds that we have gone very near to a perfection in this work of Jane Austen. We have a complete and technically a very perfect novel form. We have a limited area of territory, definitely located, and reasonably described.

We have few characters, set down with such exactness of description that not even one of the Pilgrims in Chaucer's Prologue, not even Robinson Crusoe on his island, not even Bunyan's Christian, is more perfectly known to us than is any one of these village people. We have human emotions as real as our own, and urged on by these emotions the whole play and counterplay of interest is perfectly known. The characters form a community; and the simple, uneventful drama of the community is complete. It is very near perfection.

Moreover, if we have a complete novel-form, we have an equally complete method. One can use the style of Jane Austen as a model for study in the schoolroom. (There is repression in every detail; the plot is made simple; the adjective is cut out of the sentences; every detail of finish is subordinated to a requirement of sincerity, to a limited and selected variety. The humor is cultivated, genial; it is the humor of an observer—of a refined, satisfied observer—rather than the humor of a reformer; it is the humor of one who sees the incongruities, but never dreams of questioning

the general excellence of the system as a whole.
All this is the method of a completed ideal; a
method of manifest limits, but within its limits
absolutely true.)

Still further we may claim that this novel is not only an expression of a complete novel form; it is not only expression of a complete literary method; it is also an embodiment of completed ideals. For, however often we may find a humorous comment in Jane Austen, we look in vain for a questioning of the underlying basis of society. We find in it that the natural world, that the family idea, that the social system, are taken with unquestioning acceptance. (There is no detail of nature in Jane Austen. The fields, the parks, the forests, are accepted as totals concerning whose minute details curiosity would indicate unsettled views, if not vulgar breeding.) Only a gardener, in Jane Austen's novels, would describe or minutely examine a flower. There is no questioning of the family notion; women must marry, and the wishes of the entire family, not the individual preferences, are most likely to determine

the choice. There is no questioning of the county family idea, of the patriarchal community, as the best, or at least the permanent notion. It is a novel of perfected form. Try it how you will, it stands for the completeness of that of which "The Vicar of Wakefield" was in comparison but the crude and formless sketch. A critic may read it and pronounce it perfect of its kind. A body of doctrine of the novel can be formulated from the very complete examples which one finds in "Emma," in "Sense and Sensibility," in "Northanger Abbey," or in "Pride and Prejudice."

If this be true, why, then, was not this perfection of form the end and completion of the novel? It is because perfection is next door to death; imperfection is, after all, our greatest proof of immortality. All progress is through death and resurrection; the body of this perfect novel is to perish, its life is to go on in another form. (The work of Jane Austen lacks one thing, and that one thing is intensity of interest. It lacks it because the perfection is really not the perfection of truth, but the perfection of finish. The novel fails

to stir our passions, to arouse our emotions, because it lacks the one vital quality of intensity of passion.) It is natural because a nature has been developed, and it is true to such a nature ; but natural as it is, it is mostly external nature that we get. It is the external life, even of Elizabeth ; it is the outward, the unimpassioned, the unaroused, that is depicted ; it is, after all, a novel of outer rather than of inner life, a novel of personage rather than a novel of character. It is the perfection of the novel of form), we must look beyond it for the novel of interpretation.

Possibly some reader may have thus far assented with a smile, thinking, most justly, that these excellent novels of Jane Austen are so perfect that it is very hard to read them. ' They are good novels no doubt, he says to himself, but they are not intensely interesting. Now I do not undertake to controvert this opinion, but I am sure that if the statement is true of the novels of Jane Austen, it is the one thing that cannot be said of the novels of Charlotte Bronté. We may properly consider them next ; for if it be

true that in its evolution the novel passes through a phase of perfection of form into a phase of intensity of interest, when we leave the quiet, placid, calm, gently satirical novels of Jane Austen and desire the message of the later day, we shall turn without a question to the tempest-stirred tales of Charlotte Bronté. We turn without a question. But we do not turn without a sigh. It is hard to leave placid, calm perfection to turn to rough, rude growth, however forceful. The novels of Jane Austen reflect the settled, sunny life of Southern England ; they speak to us, as did the life of the author, of peaceful content and happy conditions. Far otherwise with the work or life of the author of "*Jane Eyre*." Charlotte Bronté was the child of strained conditions. Her father was an Irishman transplanted to the north of England. Her mother was from Cornwall, born to the soft airs of Penzance and the extreme southeastern land, carried to a quick life of bleak happiness on the chilly moors of Yorkshire. Placid completeness one would little expect from such conditions of parentage, and

little enough of placid completeness do we find in the thirty-nine years of the life of Charlotte Bronté. One cannot divide it into periods. It was a life of experiences rather than a life of opportunities. It was a life of emotions; it was a personal, individual life, lived intensely. When Charlotte was five years old her mother died, leaving six babies, the eldest a child of eight years, in the parsonage of Haworth on the Yorkshire moors. Three years later, when eight years old, the little motherless thing was sent to that extraordinary school so vividly described in "*Jane Eyre*," where the poor thing endured a brief but most unhappy school life, ended the next year by the death of her two elder sisters and by her own grievous illness. At fifteen she had one year of another somewhat better school. At nineteen she was a teacher, and a very poor one, if we are to take as true her own report; at twenty-three, and again at twenty-five, a governess. From the age of twenty-six for nearly two years she was English teacher in a school in Brussels. When she was thirty-one "*Jane Eyre*" was published. When thirty-two

her only brother, an idler, an opium-eater, and a drunkard, died. Three months after the brother's death, Emily, the elder of the two remaining sisters, died. Five months after the death of Emily, Anne, the youngest and the last of the sisters, passed away, leaving Charlotte alone, at thirty-three, to comfort her half-mad father, and to write "*Shirley*" and "*Villette*." At thirty-six the last novel is finished, and the story of the life, so far as related to the writing of novels, is ended. It all reads somewhat unlike a placid story of happy living. It would even seem that happiness was not the desire of Charlotte Bronté. It is life rather than delight that she longs for. When she is twenty-three, a poor, hard-working, unsuccessful teacher, she has a proposal of marriage from a clergyman who is a most desirable person. Had the heroine in one of Jane Austen's novels received such a proposal, she would have been compelled by her family and her social circle to consider mainly the rank, the position, and the prospects of the suitor, and a decision made in utter independence of such considera-

tions of rank, position, and prospects would have seemed an indication of rashness almost beyond the verge of propriety. But Charlotte Bronté incontinently rejects the proposal, simply because she does not love the man passionately. "Ten to one," says she, "I shall never have the chance again, but no matter; I have not for him that intense attachment which would make me willing to die for him." In that one sentence we have the key to the interest we feel in the lonely, tempestuous, bitter life of the author of "*Jane Eyre*"; we have the key to the immortality of the three crude, half-formed, intensely vital novels of Charlotte Bronté. Life was worth living to Charlotte Bronté only when it offered opportunity for such intense attachment as would make her willing to die for the object of her emotion. This intense, personal life went into the novels, and has made *Villette* and *Jane Eyre* as distinct and definite personalities as Charlotte Bronté herself. Indeed, perhaps they are more so, for I suspect it would be easier for most of us to draw a picture of the soul-life of the struggling

teacher-governess of Haworth from the story of Jane Eyre, or from the story of Villette, than from the records of authentic history. The characters are creations, and their appearance marks an epoch in literature, marks a distinct and definite era in the history of the novel. Before their appearance we had had personages in fiction. In "Jane Eyre," for the first time in English fiction, the intensity of life-craving which dominates a woman who loves is presented in the pages of the novel; and the voice of the outcry of her longing comes to the world. The story of Jane Eyre is familiar enough to all of us. She is a heroine of the inner life. In the depiction of her every advantage of the external is deliberately, almost defiantly, sacrificed. In our oldest English epic, the hero, Beowulf, fights a dragon, and when going to fight with a foe who cannot wear armor and cannot carry a sword, even though that foe is a fire-breathing dragon, Beowulf chooses to sacrifice every external advantage and fights without his armor and without his sword. In the *Orlando Furioso* of Ariosto, though the hero carries an

enchanted ring and wields a magic sword at tournaments, yet when the conflict is for life, he throws away these adventitious and external aids and fights with simpler weapons. So, when Charlotte Bronté sets out to depict a stern struggle of the soul of a woman, she throws aside the external excellences by time-honored custom given to heroines. The heroine of her novel is small, dark, plain, almost insignificant, in person ; she is poor ; she is a governess serving under orders. How shall one make a heroine out of such as this ? And the hero, what shall he be in a novel ? Shall he not be beautiful, graceful, courteous, virtuous, and eligible ? What say you to a hero who is ugly, who is awkward and brutal, who has been dissipated, and who has a wife ? It is as if in the interest of the intenser life that Charlotte Bronté counted all external things but as dross, and would have us also count them as things not worth our care. The influences upon the heroine in "Jane Eyre" are not from the outside. She is moved, stirred, aroused, by the strength of her own emotion solely. The dominance of the exter-

nal in the novel of personal life was ended when "Jane Eyre" was written. The one thing lacking in "Pride and Prejudice" is intensity of interest. The one thing thrilling through "Jane Eyre" and "Villette" is intensity of interest—interest in a system of life, interest in nature, interest in one's own soul-life, interest in emotion as emotion. When "Jane Eyre" is finished, passion has entered into the novel.

There is interest in a system of life in these novels of Charlotte Bronté. There was, to be sure, a careful portrayal of an existing system of life in "Pride and Prejudice," in "Northanger Abbey," or in "Emma." But there was very little interest manifested in it by any one. (The characters endured their lives in Jane Austen's novels rather than lived them.) We found tolerant or tired acceptance, tempered by gentle sarcasm and humorous commentary, to be the attitude toward the social system. No one seemed to care very much about it, to be very much elated by its pleasures, or very much depressed by its disasters. In so far as any feeling existed toward the social and religious system then prevailing,

it was a feeling of comfortable acceptance, always with the reservation that one might make his little witticism concerning its incongruities. But there is no acceptance in "*Jane Eyre*." The book is a story of spiritual, of intellectual revolt. The injustice and incongruities of the social system are not matter for humorous comment to Charlotte Bronté, or to Jane Eyre, or to Lucy Snowe. Intensity of interest in the justice or injustice of social procedure gives to any question concerning this system a seriousness too complete for jesting. There is interest, too, in nature. In "*Jane Eyre*" the world without is not to be compared with the world within, and yet no novel up to this time had portrayed the natural world so well, because it portrays it through the interested eyes of Jane Eyre. There is interest in soul-life. There is interest in emotion as emotion. The life of the novel of "*Jane Eyre*," of "*Villette*," is the soul-life of the woman Jane Eyre, of the woman Lucy Snowe. We live that life with her. And the intensity of that soul-life fills the book with an

energy of assertion of life which is the essence of individuality.

It is small wonder that the book, "Jane Eyre," had to fight for its life. An intensely vital individual is not a comfortable addition to a satisfied community. An intensely interested person is an Oliver Twist whose asking for more is a demand likely to be most unpleasant to the controllers of the existing vested interests. The novel, "Jane Eyre," was a story of such an intensely vital individual, of such an intensely interested person. Jane Eyre was a person who came asking questions and presenting opinions likely enough to disturb settled usages in the existing social order of the England of 1847. Indeed, the book seemed to strike a blow at the very basis of things in the social order. It is small wonder it was called immoral. This little, plain, obscure individual, Jane Eyre, did more than to question the wisdom of existing forms and to speak the language of revolt. Others had questioned; and some had spoken—though not in novels—the language of revolt. But she went farther, and asserted the right of the individual man

—worse yet, the right of the individual woman—to make decisions against convention, against custom, even against authority; she asserted the right of this individual man, of this individual woman, to make final decisions on the most momentous questions. We are somewhat used to such a doctrine as this in these days of the New Woman ; but it certainly was not the accepted doctrine in the social and literary England of fifty years ago. “This story,” said the most bitter and the most candid of hostile reviewers, “is a picture of a natural heart.” “Jane Eyre is throughout a personification of an unregenerate and undisciplined spirit.” “The biography of Jane Eyre is preëminently an anti-Christian composition.” “It is true that Jane Eyre does right, and exerts great moral strength ; but it is the strength of a mere heathen mind which is a law unto itself.” These are the words of one critic ; but he voiced the judgment of many. For, to many persons in the England of 1847, it appeared that a mind, especially a female mind, which evinced individuality enough to be in any

degree a law unto itself, was a heathen mind, and was the fit co-partner of an unregenerate and undisciplined spirit. Besides this reviewer, many voices called the book immoral, and with much show of reason ; for certainly, from the standpoint of one completed and complacent, it must at that time have seemed a most immoral book. For example, to one satisfied that the then accepted church doctrines and the then prevailing church forms were final doctrines and eternal forms, the religious questionings in "Jane Eyre" must have seemed such a revolt against the moral government of this world, such a revolt against the fixed order of the moral universe, such a revolt against the government of God, as must tend to overthrow the very foundations of morality. Jane does not gently comment. She defiantly questions. She asks for such an answer as will convince her own intellect and satisfy her own heart's deepest desire ; wanting which answer, she stands apart, demanding. This is a new attitude in the novel. To all the personages in the novels of Jane Austen, the assertion of the right of individual reason to

inquire, question, search out, and decide in accord with the judgment of individual reason would have seemed a dangerous doctrine. And to most of them, any interest in such questions would have seemed to indicate an uncultivated, if not a perverted, mind.

But the religious questions in the book were its least dangerous utterances, important only as indicating an attitude of mind and spirit. Vastly more disturbing to the society of 1847 was the conception of the ideal social order as it lay in Charlotte Brontë's mind. It was a crude enough social system that Charlotte Brontë suggested in "Jane Eyre." A society filled with Jane Eyres and Rochesteres would be, even now, a little irksome. But its presentation does not startle now as it did forty or fifty years ago. Then it certainly gave a picture out of accord with ideas of propriety, if not out of accord with the accepted principles of morality. The extreme ugliness of Rochester was an incongruous notion out of harmony with the proper attitude toward the hero of a book. The conduct of Jane Eyre toward Rochester

— and we remember that she horrified all England by telling him she loved him — certainly went beyond the notions of most men of the proper method of a maiden toward a man. Likewise the attitude of Rochester toward Jane, with its brutal frankness, its roughness, its domineering, hard-handed kindness, was a new attitude for a lover, and not, at first sight, an inviting one. Underneath it there seemed to be a philosophy still more dangerous than the exhibition of manners and customs ; for Jane Eyre certainly hints, and Rochester certainly hints, by both speech and conduct, at the equality of the sexes ; and the notion of the equality of the sexes was, I suspect, an immoral notion in the England of 1847.

But all these questions of religion, these questions of social order, these questions of convention, are but the detail ; and all these little matters of method, these matters of attitude and philosophy, are also but detail. At the basis of them all lies the tremendous emphasis laid in the book upon individual life and upon individual passion. Quick

life, hot love, vital emotion, personal influence,—these are the essentials of existence to Jane Eyre. The right of the uninstructed individual to stand alone against all principalities, all conventions, dignities, powers; the right of a man to frame his life in accord with his own will, no matter what society might say; the right of the soul of man or woman to stand as peer of any other soul, be it man or woman; the right of a woman to love, and to die so please she for her love,—these rights demanded Jane Eyre. It is the first intense presentation of individuality in fiction.

It is individuality, but it is not its highest form. It is an assertive individuality rather than a commanding personality that we find in Jane Eyre. For strong as it is, vigorous, energetic, vital, intense as is the presentation, it is, after all, but a single individual that is presented. And that individual is presented as out of sympathy with, if not as in revolt from, the accepted principles of life. Jane Eyre is presented to us as an individual, separate, detached, assertive, independent. She

does not influence, nor does she strive to influence, those who live about her. To work out her own life is the sole concern of her existence. The representation of a strong personality under stress of many emotions, accepting the compulsion of organic relation to the community about it, accepting the responsibilities as well as the opportunities of life, would be a picture of something more complete, more developed, than a selfish, irresponsible individual. A study of such a personality in fiction would indicate a later rather than an earlier stage of the novelist's art. And if it is true that these were days when the conviction of the value of individual opinion, and of the importance of individual action, was working its way into the literature of the novel, we might expect that a defiant assertion of an individuality in fiction would be followed by a less violent but a more subtle, a less crude but a more studied, a less simple but a more complete, presentation of the relation of such individuality to society at large. We might expect to find a study of a complex individuality, a matured and developed personality. If

found, it would seem to indicate a later stage of expression in fiction. Such a study of the development of personality I suggest in the story of the life of Hester Prynne in Hawthorne's "Scarlet Letter." It is not because it stands alone as an example of excellence in fiction that I take this particular novel. The years between 1840 and 1850 were fruitful. In those ten years, as one remembers, in France, Dumas was writing the "Monte Cristo," Eugène Sue "The Wandering Jew." In England, Bulwer was writing "The Caxtons"; Mrs. Gaskell was writing "Mary Barton"; Charles Kingsley was writing "Alton Locke" and "Yeast"; Dickens was writing "David Copperfield"; Thackeray was writing "Vanity Fair" and "Pendennis." In Russia, Turgénieff was writing the "Annals of a Sportsman" to free the serfs in Siberia. In America, Mrs. Stowe was writing "Uncle Tom's Cabin" to free the slaves of our Southern States. It was a great era of novel-expression. Yet among all these novels there is, perhaps, no single one which presents to us with such power, and with so little of distracting circumstance, a

single person whose soul-struggle stands for the world-sadness and the world-stress of humanity. It is conflict that we have in "Jane Eyre," an assertion of individual will, a fine capacity of individual emotion, and all this in conflict with the world opposing. But it is struggle, not conflict, the inner, not the outer, warfare, that we have in Hester Prynne. It is the stir and the struggle of the soul afflicted, punished, but growing into larger development, into riper life, through this stress and struggle and affliction. And if I seemed to indicate that the novel was in process of development when I wrote that the vitality of the assertion of life was the essence of individuality, and that because of this vitality "Jane Eyre" was an indication of an advance in the art of fiction beyond the spirit and the method of Jane Austen's day, then I may further claim now that the completed picture of the soul of Hester Prynne is indicative of a step in advance as great as, if less marked than, the step from Jane Austen to Charlotte Brontë. It is a step in advance because the picture of Hester Prynne portrays a human soul not merely as a strong,

demanding individuality, but as under stress of such relation to verdict of law and to the rights of fellow-mortals as to compel its development into a completed personality. The novel of the "Scarlet Letter" is one of the links in the development of the novel from a means of portraying single phases of emotion to a vehicle of highest expressional power. It was written by a psychological student of the problems which harass the human soul. There is little need to say much concerning the life of Nathaniel Hawthorne, for it is familiar enough to most of us. And there is little need, in any case, here to present that life, for the "Scarlet Letter" does not reflect the life of Hawthorne in any such sense as does "Villette" or "Jane Eyre" reflect the life of Charlotte Bronté. The "Scarlet Letter" is in no sense an auto-biographical novel. It is the study of a development of a human soul under circumstances of stress and conditions of struggle. The scene is in the Puritan colony of Massachusetts in the middle years of the seventeenth century. The conditions of life were hard in the Puritan Colony. The religion the Puritan believed, the

religion the Puritan lived, was a hard religion. There was little room for more than justice. There was no poetry in the lives, and little in the hearts, or on the lips, of our stern ancestors in New England two hundred and fifty years ago. Such environment Hawthorne gives to the characters of his story. It is a tragedy—a tragedy sombre, intense, unrelieved. It is almost a fatalistic tragedy; almost as stern as if it had been written by *Æschylus*. It is not a love story; it is not a story of youth; it is not a story of contemporaneous life; it is not a story of eager hope. Hester Prynne having sinned is doomed for punishment to wear the scarlet letter as the symbol of the seared soul forever on her bosom; made an outcast from social joy forever. And the story is the record of the growth of the thoughtless soul of the girl, Hester Prynne, into the sad, strong soul of a mature woman. As accessories to this record of growth, we have scenery of circumstance and scenery of characters. To get perspective, atmosphere, verisimilitude, Hawthorne goes back to a recognizable era of past history. He paints with steadiness the out-

ward aspects, and makes credible the inner motive, of the Puritan Colony in the Boston of 1658. Yet the book is in no sense an historical novel. To give vividness, concreteness, objectivity, to this story of the inner life, to this record of the growth of the conscience, of the growth of responsibility, of the growth of religion, within the breast of Hester Prynne, Hawthorne uses the symbolism which is the picture language of the infancy of awakening fancy. In the story he carries on the crude symbolism of the Puritan court of justice decreeing a visible A as an objective reminder of the branded heart—carries on this crude symbolism into the most delicate and refined suggestions. The unseen forces, the unseen monitors, the unseen avengers, float before our eyes, are painted on the clouds, are burned upon the flesh, in mystic symbols. These mystic symbols are like the weird sisters in "Macbeth"; they are the objectification of mystery. The revelation of the working of the spirit of regeneration upon the soul of Hester Prynne is embodied for us in the weird child, Pearl. She is a living

symbol, at once the incarnation of sin, the personification of the Scarlet Letter, the emblem of hope, and the prophecy of pardon. All this is the poetry of mysticism. Yet the "Scarlet Letter" is no more a mystical romance than it is an historical novel.

But if we have mediæval mysticism in the symbolism of the work, we have something very like Greek simplicity and Greek directness in the development. The novel is a Greek tragedy. Like the Greek, it is synthetic and creative rather than analytic. Like the Greek tragedy, the novel of the "Scarlet Letter" has a single story, few principal characters, largeness, unity of treatment, directness, sternness, relentlessness. As in the Greek tragedy, also, the story begins after the guilt has been incurred, and the motive of the story is the relation of the soul of man to Nemesis and justice. There is Greek suggestion even in the minor detail; Pearl is as a chorus to voice for us the comment of the unseen powers. There is Greek atmosphere. All the characters seem to be being rather than acting. Yet the novel is

no more a Greek tragedy than it is an historical tale; it is no more a Greek tragedy than it is a mediæval romance. It is, in one, a Greek tragedy, a mediæval romance, a modern historical tale. It is a master work, limited to no age, belonging to all experiences, to all time.

The "Scarlet Letter" is a study of the working of Nemesis upon three human souls. Hester has sinned, and openly bears that punishment of which the scarlet letter is the visible symbol. Dimmesdale has also sinned, but, not yet overtaken by discovery, is striving by the nobility of his present life to avoid the revenging Fates. Chillingworth, least of the three, has not technically sinned, but has twice violated the sanctity of a human soul, in marrying Hester without love, and in assuming the right to privately punish the guilty. To Chillingworth comes failure and the hopelessness of hate; to Dimmesdale comes salvation through confession and sacrifice; to Hester comes a renewed and sanctified soul perfected through suffering. The message of the novel is that punishment is

spiritual, that it avails not to brand the bosom nor to compel penance for the flesh. It is the soul that sins; it is the soul that must atone.

There is a lesson which goes beyond this message. It goes beyond any philosophy of individuality hitherto manifested in fiction, for we have in the "Scarlet Letter" something far greater than an assertion of individuality such as flashed out in *Jane Eyre*. We have in it something more, even, than a portrayal of the slow development of personality through discipline, renunciation, and suffering. The lesson of the "Scarlet Letter" goes beyond the suggestion of such spiritual assertion as one finds in *Jane Eyre*. It is the lesson of Abnegation. To make confession, to yield, to abase oneself,—this it is to be strong, to conquer, to exalt oneself. It is the old lesson of the New Testament, "He that loseth his life shall save it." For to such a man as Dimmesdale confession was the giving up of self to bring himself into right relations with others. Hester Prynne has lost, Dimmesdale loses, the pride of indi-

viduality to gain the reality of life. This is the greatest lesson of the book. The life of abnegation, not the life of assertion, is the life which makes for final influence and completes the personality.

Through such stages the novel seems to have gone in its evolution in the middle years of the nineteenth century. It then came to effectiveness as an instrument for portraying the complex emotions of the human soul. In its pages thenceforth one finds embodiments of individuals, personalities, human souls. From this study of its growth and complexity it would be easy to predict that the next stage of the novel would be the exposition of the individual's duty to society and of society's duty to the individual. Such is the next stage in the novel; and we come to the Novel of Purpose. And we might predict that the stage succeeding would be the deeper study of the relations of the individual to the life about him. This is the succeeding stage, and we come to the Novel of Problem. Indeed, the Novel of Purpose and the Novel of Problem are almost pres-

ent with us in the work of Hawthorne. The masterpiece is of no age; it is of all ages. The "Scarlet Letter" is not alone an interpretation of personality. It is the first suggestion and the forerunner of the Novel of Purpose and of the Novel of Problem. It is the convincing proof of the greatness of the art of Hawthorne that the "Scarlet Letter" is thus at once a presentation and a prophecy.

CHAPTER III

THE HISTORICAL NOVEL

STRICKLY speaking, the name "Historical Novel" is a contradiction in terms.) For whatever specific meaning we may give to the term novel, in special application to such forms as the romance, the story, the fiction of purpose, problem, or adventure, we never fail to understand the term novel to be the designation of a work of fiction. On the other hand, however freely we may interpret the word historical, however much of philosophy, social science, political economy, or even of domestic and community life, we may consider as properly within its province, we certainly take the facts of life, the records of actual past existence, as its basis. "Fiction is the underlying basis of the novel ; fact is the underlying basis of history." The historical novel apparently becomes a novel by virtue of departure from history,

and in so far as it is a history it is less than perfect as a novel.) Either bad history or bad fiction must be the result. Thus says logical theory ; and the inevitable conclusion from this reasoning is adverse to the historical novel as a justifiable literary form.)

This one may postulate as theory ; and from such theoretical demonstration alone may logically declare that the historical novel is impossible. And indeed, this declaration would be well supported by the consideration of the facts of literary history ; for we search in vain the literatures of the world, previous to the nineteenth century, for good examples of the historical novel. One can, indeed, go back to Greek literature and find support of literary opinion for the proposition that the *Cyropædia* of Xenophon had in it characteristics of a historical novel. But the more one considers this excellent work, the less satisfied one is with the proposition that it is a historical novel. Certainly the *Cyropædia* has historical elements in it ; and also enough fictitious elements to make it possible to consider it in a study of fiction. But it is really a

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political treatise, presenting suggestions for the education of a king, and illustrating them by historical analogies. In any sense which we in modern times give to the word novel, or to the word historical, it cannot be said to be a historical novel. Nor do we fare better in our search if we go on through Greek history to the later period. There were romances in the literature of Greece after the Alexandrian conquest ; but they were tales of adventure, entirely disconnected from history. (We cannot find the historical novel in Roman literature. Nor is our search rewarded better in Mediæval times. There were sagas, heroic romances, epical romances, poems of adventure, romances of chivalry ; but there is certainly no historical novel in the whole of the Middle Ages.) We come down to very modern times, to the dawn of the present century, before we find a single example.

Such is the testimony of literary history. Yet this absence of the historical novel from the literatures of the world up to very recent days does not really prove so much as to the legitimacy of such a literary form as would at

first appear. For it might have been inferred that the historical novel must necessarily have been a very late form of fiction.) What is the historical novel? It is a record of individual life, of individual emotion, in circumstances and times of historical interest. For its making two things are requisite,—that there be a conception of, and a fondness for, the facts and spirit of history; and that there be a knowledge of, and an appreciation of, the importance of the individual life. Now both these requisites are modern qualities of mind. Through the whole course of the Middle Ages the world had no conception of the facts of history and no fondness for its spirit. Those were days of romance; the truthfulness of history found no admirers.) In our modern sense of the term historian, one may truthfully say that the Middle Ages were ages without a historian. The compulsion of truth had never been laid upon the historian of the Mediæval days. There could be no history, and there could be no fiction, because the line which separated them was never drawn. The chroniclers from whom Holinshed draws his

interesting history name Noah, King Arthur, and King Lear in the line of record of the kings of Britain, as unconsciously and as honestly as they name King Alfred or King John. And the same description, and indeed the same picture, stands for the mythical king as for the actual king. There were chroniclers in plenty in the Middle Ages. There was Asser and Gildas and William of Malmesbury and Henry of Huntingdon and Nennius and Matthew Paris and Florence of Worcester, who may be called historians ; and there was Geoffrey of Monmouth and Wace and Archdeacon Walter and Layamon and Brunne and Malory, who may be called translators of history into poetry and prose. But who among them all so narrates history that the line between truth and poetry, between verity and romance, is strictly drawn? No one. Down to Holinshed's latest edition in 1577, only slightly more reliable as history than the historical dramas of Shakespeare to which it gave the inspiration, the idea of bondage to truth had never gained possession of a historian's mind. *(The notion of history had not entered into the Mediæval mind.)*

The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries gave history to the modern world.)

Three historians there are in the seventeenth century: Camden, whose "Remains" were published in 1605; Herbert of Cherbury, whose history of Henry VIII. was published in 1649; Hobbes, whose history of Britain was published in 1679. But the great historical writers belong to the eighteenth century. They are Clarendon, whose history of the Great Rebellion appeared in 1704; Hume, whose history of Great Britain began to appear in 1754; Robertson, whose history of Scotland appeared in 1759; Goldsmith, whose history of England appeared in 1771; and Gibbon, whose "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire" appeared in 1776. These historians taught the world the meaning and the import of the word history, and they so prepared the minds of men as to make it possible for a later Walter Scott to put history into a novel.)

But they did not make it possible to put the novel into history. For that, also, the time had been ripening. The day of conviction of the value of individual human life had first

to come. (The novel is the story of an experience in human life under stress of emotion. It demands interest in man as man and in woman as woman; it demands a sense of the universality of the interest in the emotion of a single individual; it demands a conviction that if that emotion be real and intense and true, the life is a typical life, and its portrayal matter for the concern of all mankind.) But these are modern thoughts. Jefferson in stately phrase in the Declaration of Independence says:—“We hold this truth to be self-evident,—that all men are created equal”; and for the first time in an utterance of equal importance is the notion of individual worth, the dignity of man as man, asserted. Yet no less significantly, if less dogmatically, did Fielding assert the same proposition when, twenty-seven years before the Declaration of Independence was penned, he made the world take eager interest in one commonplace individual, Tom Jones. It is an assertion of the rights of man when Sterne compels us to care for Uncle Toby and for Tristram Shandy; when Richardson makes the woes of Pamela

move the hearts of a generation ; when Smollett finds nobility of character in a Roderick Random or a Humphrey Clinker ; when Goldsmith paints a universal type in the unfortunate Vicar of Wakefield. These are no heroes such as Mediæval romance writers loved to paint. Tristram Shandy, and Tom Jones, and Humphrey Clinker, and Pamela, would have captivated few imaginations in the twilight days of the Mediæval centuries. Yet they are in the pages of Sterne, and Smollett, and Fielding, and Richardson by right and not by sufferance. The individual, no matter of what degree, now has rights of representation in the novel no less than in government. This is a modern utterance. It is the declaration of independence in fiction, and ends forever the exclusive domination of the Mediæval romance.

These two streams of influence made the historical novel possible. It is necessarily an evolved form ; for the habit of truth in history rises not from its Mediæval grave till these very modern days. It is necessarily a modern form ; for the notion of democracy, the most modern of notions, is fundamental in the novel.

The novel is the epic of democracy. It is no accident that the great days of the historical novel followed the great days of strife for liberty in America and France. The time was ripe; the right of the individual had been asserted; the nations had been making history; Clarendon, Hume, Robertson, and Gibbon had made history credible; Fielding, Goldsmith, Miss Edgeworth, Miss Burney had made the novel; it was for Walter Scott to make the historical novel.

We thus see that two streams of influence — the sense of the verity of history, and the sense of the dominating importance of the individual made the historical novel possible.) To these two influences came a third — the voice of romantic desire. It was not a new cry, but was at once as a voice from the knightly wanderers of the Middle Ages calling to adventure, and as a fragrance over the useful years from the spicy gardens of the Mediæval days. New thoughts in the minds of men roused newer aspirations in the hearts of men. If zeal for individual liberty gave us a Declaration of Independence in America and gave us

a whole new literature of individuality in England, it gave also new pulsings in the hearts of men who write and read. Clarendon, Hume, Robertson, and Gibbon builded even better than they knew. They aroused the minds of men to an appreciation of the truth of history. The new, quick intellectual life of a political and social awakening stirred the imaginations of men. New thought has its emotional as well as its political demands. Poetry and romance were the legacies of the Middle Ages; history as actually lived by men in scenes and days made manifest was the legacy of the eighteenth century; aspiration for liberty, for individual living under new ideals, was the message of Goethe, of Jefferson, of Tom Paine, even of Napoleon. The aspiration touched literature, and we had Byron, Shelley, Coleridge, Keats in poetry; we had the romance of history in prose. Quickenings make literature. The stir of life makes new life. To realize in one's own life or in one's own fancy the new ideals of a newer day; to go forth into experience when new life urges,—this is in quickening times the heart's

desire. As Chaucer puts it in his "Canterbury Tales":—

"Whan Zephirus eek with his swete breeth
Inspired hath in every holt and heeth
The tendre croppes, and the yonge sonne
Hath in the Ram his halfe cours y-ronne,
And smale fowles maken melodye,
That slepen al the night with open ye,
So pricketh hem nature in hir corages;
Than longen folk to goon on pilgrimages."

To go on a mental or spiritual pilgrimage is one's first desire in the springtime of one's thought. The day of new life is the day of romance. Historical investigation had come into the world and the heart of man demanded the poetry and the romance of history. For, be it a true aspiration, or be it merely a suggestion of desire, the heart of man clings to the belief that hovering over the appearance is a romantic and poetic ideal of which the appearance is but the symbol. The poetry of history, the romance of history—for these men sigh even when reading Clarendon, Hume, or Robertson. The historians had made the baseless romance of the Middle Ages hence-

forth impossible, because incredible; its revival in Walpole's "Castle of Otranto," in Beckford's "Vathek," in Mrs. Radcliffe's "Mysteries of Udolpho," only made evident that the day of verity had sealed its doom. The time was ripe for a genius who could put into history the poetry of history; who could put into veracious tales of the Mediæval days the romance of the Mediæval time. That genius was Walter Scott.)

(We justly call Sir Walter Scott the father of the historical novel, and "Waverley," published in 1814, the first typical example) True enough, there were others, earlier in time: "The Recess; or a Tale of Other Times," published in 1783, by Miss Sophia Lee; "Gondez the Monk," in 1805, by S. W. H. Ireland; "The Borderers," in 1812; "Thaddeus of Warsaw," in 1803, and "Scottish Chiefs," in 1810, by Miss Jane Porter; "Queen-hoo Hall," left unfinished, in 1808, by Joseph Strutt. I have named but a few of these early attempts; the unfamiliarity of the names proves the weakness of the claim they make. Of them all, the "Scottish Chiefs"

and "Thaddeus of Warsaw" alone are really claimants; these are charming tales, and only less typical examples than "Waverley" or "Quentin Durward." But Scott is, after all, the real creator as well as the master artist in this form of fiction. His spell is upon most of us still — fourscore years since the Waverley novels were written. Indeed, history in Scotland is edited, or I may say personally conducted, to this day by Walter Scott.

One need not here write much of the life of Scott, nor recount the story of the Waverley novels. Fit it is that the life of one who created that form of novel which is a blending into unity of fact and fancy, of history and romance, should be himself a subject for our respectful regard, and a hero for our romantic admiration. Sir Walter Scott was at once a canny Scotch citizen and a romantic dreamer. The picture of the excellent lawyer, clerk of Sessions, sheriff of Selkirkshire, working out his fortune in the ordinary way through Edinburgh to Abbotsford, is a satisfactory portrait of a useful citizen. The picture of the

lame and never robust Walter Scott, involved at fifty-four by another's mischance in enormous debt, refusing to accept compromise or lightening of the load, setting himself to pay the debt with his life's blood, is like a hero of romance. The soul of him transmutes the body of him, in that view seen, as Carlyle might say. Such a blending of the real and the ideal was the character of Walter Scott. It is the basal characteristic of the Historical Romance.)

(It is somewhat the fashion of the day to make light of Walter Scott's claims to genius. Something of a reaction, perhaps, this may be from the extravagant and indiscriminate laudation of the earlier English critics. It is rather the fashion now to say that Walter Scott has no capacity for passion; that his style is inflated; that he comments without reflection, discourses without meditation; that he can never give the "expression of the highest raptures of love, thought, and nature.") Even the admirers of Scott make some such comment as this, while those who are not open in admiration go much farther. Says a recent

critic : "We turn, say, from the purblind worshippers of Scott to Scott himself, and recognize that (he often wrote a style cumbersome and diffuse ; that he was tediously analytical where the modern novelist is dramatic, and evolved his characters by means of long-winded explanation and commentary ; that, except in the case of his lower class personages, he made them talk as seldom man, and never woman talked ; that he was tiresomely descriptive ; that on the simplest occasions he went about half a mile to express a thought that could be uttered in ten paces across lots ; and that he trusted his reader's intuitions so little that he was apt to rub in his appeals to them.) He was probably right ; the generation which he wrote for was duller than this, slower witted, æsthetically untrained, and in maturity not so apprehensive of an artistic intention as the children of to-day. All this is not saying Scott was not a great man ; he was a great man, and a very great novelist as compared with novelists who went before him. He can still amuse young people ; but they

ought to be instructed how false and how mistaken he often is, with his Mediæval ideals, his blind Jacobitism, his intense devotion to aristocracy and royalty ; his acquiescence in the division of men into noble and ignoble, patrician and plebeian, sovereign and subject, as if it were the law of God ; for all which, indeed, he is not to blame as he would be if he were one of our contemporaries." So much says this critic and so much says many another critic of to-day. But all this seems the comment of the "apple on the bough to the apple in the store-room," as Miss Phelps once phrased it, rather than the final utterance of a candid critic. I shall not try to undertake the defence, for there is no need. It may be that the great writer of to-day appeals to a subtler and scarcer instinct, to a more recently learned emotion than that which responds to the sort of beauty called charming. It may be a question, as Hardy suggests in his "*Return of the Native*," "if the exclusive claim of orthodox beauty is not approaching its last quarter." It may be true that to-day "human souls find them-

selves in closer and closer harmony with external things wearing a sombre distastefulness to our race when it was young." All this may be true; but let us be thankful if we still continue young, and if the Walter Scotts of the world "can still amuse young people." For youth it is that moves the world and youth it is that makes life livable.) A sad day will it be when the fiery spirit and the poetic romance of Waverley, Kenilworth, Quentin Durward, Ivanhoe, and Guy Mannering fail to find an answer in our spirits and emotions.

Nevertheless, of the criticisms made upon Sir Walter Scott, there is one that here concerns us. This criticism is that Scott changes the facts of history in the interest of his art. It is true that he does so change them. He tells us in the "Dedicatory Epistle" to "Ivanhoe" that it is "necessary for exciting interest of any kind that the subject assumed should be, as it were, translated into the manners as well as the age we live in." Scott does so translate. He changes the style of the conversation from the exact imitation of the older form to a romantic dialect symbolical of rather than imitative of

the actual form. He changes the sequence of events so that the action in the novels of Scott does not necessarily follow the sequence of actual history. In the novel of Kenilworth, for example, the visit of Elizabeth is made at a time and under circumstances far enough from the actual. Bondage to exact historical fact was certainly not felt by Sir Walter Scott. One may go further and point out divergences from historical accuracy in larger matters than dialect or chronological order. In color, atmosphere, and relation, the presentations of Scott rarely correspond perfectly to actual historical fact. It is questionable, for example, whether the character of Queen Elizabeth is told in "Kenilworth" as history would indicate; and it is still more questionable whether the story of Amy Robsart, as told by Scott in the same novel, can be historically verified in detail. In almost all of Scott's stories there is an intentional divergence from history.) Modern readers are, I suspect, not in agreement as to the effect of this departure from historical accuracy; the freedom of romance attracts one; the

atmosphere of unreality offends another. I do not here make an argument on one side or the other. I simply point out that Scott, in making departures from historical accuracy, was fully aware that he was making them, and verily thought he thus did service to the reader. For Scott had a perfectly defined ideal of the historical novel. He suggests this ideal in the prefaces to several of the novels, particularly "Ivanhoe" and "Quentin Durward" (and to a certain extent he wrote in accordance with this theory. His conception of the ideal historical novel one may, perhaps, set forth in the following propositions. To Scott the historical novel was to be a grouping of the facts of history so centralized as to illuminate a passion, plot, or character; the historical novel should present the events of history so focalized as to form a picture. In this view history is centrifugal; the novel is centripetal. The thread of history is like a vine with tendrils stretched out, wrapping around unrelated events; the novel is an artificial construction. History is a natural growth; the plot of a novel

is an artificial fabric. History is narrative ; the novel should be either histrionic or romantic. One essential difference exists between history and the historical novel ; and that essential difference is unity in the form —a unity developed out of the occurrences of history or read into the occurrences of history by the creative imagination of the author.) History then may be said to be related to the historical novel as the architect's elevation is related to the perspective view of an artist. In the historical novel there may be foreshortening, picturesque grouping, design ; but it is in the interest of the completeness of the picture.(The historical novel is not mere history ; it is rather magnetized history in which every fact is quiveringly tendent toward some focal pole of unity. With such propositions as these one may, perhaps, set forth fairly the theory of Walter Scott : and it may be a wholesome check upon a tendency to criticise the Waverley Novels if, in reading them, we keep this theory in mind.) "It is a sure mark of narrowness and defective powers of perception,"

says Mr. Brownell, "to fail to discover the point of view even of what one disesteems." Whether we ourselves like the theory or not, it was certainly honestly held by Scott, and one need study literary records but very slightly to realize that in its day it was amply justified in results. History personally conducted, under the romantic guidance of Sir Walter Scott, gives a zest to exploration, gilds the memory of days gone by, and makes complete the cherished visions of our early years.

Nevertheless, though Scott founded the historical novel, enunciated its most successful theory, and is, perhaps, still the greatest historical novelist, he is not the best exponent of his own theory. Attractive as is the theory of the romantic magnetization of history, overhanging it always is the shadow of the anger of the great god Verity. Scott was almost too ingrainedly honest for his theory. There are evidences of struggle when the Scotch lawyer becomes the romantic idealist in these historical novels. In truth, the novels never really desert fact; sometimes the story almost painfully and regretfully seems to cling to

fact.) It is the pathetic complaint of one of our great humorists that, try as he would, he could never escape from the dominion of fact. He regrets that in spite of his desires some facts crept into his history. "I cannot help it," he says sadly, "the truth is, that facts exude from me,—like the ottar of roses from the otter." The humorist had no overwhelming reason for his grief. But Scott might have suffered distress with sound basis, for Scott's novels were never a perfect example of his own theory. The honor of writing a historical novel completely free from slavery to history was reserved for the work of a very different creator—Alexander Dumas. In point of time, Dumas ought to belong to a later generation; for his first historical romance, *Les trois mousquetaires*, was not published till 1844, thirty years after Waverley. But Dumas really belongs to the earlier day. (He represents a perfect embodiment of the theory Scott clearly enunciated and but imperfectly illustrated.) Dumas did not merely write historical novels; his whole life is an historical romance. With him the

novel is more than magnetized history ; it is history completely polarized. In *Les trois mousquetaires* all history is “fluid and passing” ; facts are but atoms eddying in the current of the master’s genius into a stream of unified portrayal. *Les trois mousquetaires* is a flashlight picture of the year 1628 in France. Those were the days when Louis XIII. was on the throne of France, and Charles I. on the throne of England. But in the novel of Dumas, Louis is not the ruler of France, nor is the young Charles I. the ruler of England; Richelieu in France and Buckingham in England are the real powers behind the thrones. The historical framework of the romance is the study of plot, intrigue, foil, and counterplot as incited by Richelieu and Buckingham. One D’Artagnan, a young nobleman, comes up to Paris from a southern province to enter the band of musketeers which is the grand guard of honor to the sovereign, that he may thereby help his fortune and do service for his king. In this band of musketeers three noblemen are then serving under the assumed names of Athos, Porthos, and

Aramis. The story of the three musketeers is the story of the exploits of these three men led by the youthful, brave, courageous, masterful D'Artagnan. I need not recount the familiar tale of the splendid exploits of this little band of devoted men. They served the queen; they served their sovereign; they foiled twice the plots of Richelieu; they almost saved the life of Buckingham. The whole picture in these wonderful romances is instinct with life. We have vividness of description: we have scenes relived; we have the atmosphere of the time; we have the life of the time; we have plentifullness of detail. We can see with our own eyes the cardinal's palace, the house of D'Artagnan, the narrow streets, the tumultuous life of the day, the horses, the methods of life, the hunting park in England, the duels by the Louvre. There is nothing lacking in the picture to the complete simulation of verity.

Nevertheless these vivid, life-suggesting novels of Dumas are absolutely independent of historical truth. In Dumas' story Buckingham declares war against France, simply that

when concluded with a peace he may have reason for a journey into France to advance his private friendship with the queen. In Dumas' story it is Richelieu who orders the death of Buckingham ; and it is Richelieu's emissary who stirs the zeal of Felton to do the actual deed of assassination. These things are not the truth of history ; they are the motives of romance. Some of the most powerful passages in Dumas' work are absolutely independent of verity. The scene of the bastion on Saint-Gervais, for example, is realism in which there is not a particle of truth. A Dumas might say it is truer than truth ; might say that it is completely credible simply because of, and not in spite of, the fact that it is absolutely impossible. This is not the truth of history ; it is rather history seen in a glass brightly. It is not history ; it is rather the romantic polarization of history.

Yet the general impression is not one of falseness. For all this romantic unreality is informed and saturated with an ideal. All these events are presented so as to bring

out a single definite picture. The picture is the group of D'Artagnan and his three friends. The ideal is that epic ideal of loyalty, courage, achievement, of which D'Artagnan is the embodiment. He stands for unphilosophized achievement, splendid daring, unfaltering loyalty, romantic devotion, epic heroism. This ideal presentation is the one true thing in the romance. D'Artagnan stands for it; and Athos, Porthos, Aramis, are but differentiations of this one ideal. The ideal has moved men. There is a story of a frontier hunter who read a copy of the "Three Musketeers" left in his cabin by some visitor, and found for the first time in it the picture of what was to him an ideal man. He saved his money, left his cabin, and journeyed to New York to find in that centre of civilization such nobility, such a spirit of generosity, such unfaltering courage. It is said that he went back disappointed to his frontier hut. So, many men, in many lands, have been moved by this ideal of Dumas. It is, perhaps, as romantic, incomplete, and unreal, as are some of the details of the plot, and as

impossible of complete realization. Nevertheless it is a splendid expression.

Yet it may in these days be asked if it can be possible that a story which is not completely true can give a true impression. I do not undertake to answer the question ; but I take an illustration from another art for an answer. I vividly remember a picture of Napoleon which was the first of those romantic pictures of heroes of which so many feeble imitations have since appeared. This picture was supposed to be a view of Napoleon as he appeared when the sun of Austerlitz was bursting through the fog of the morning. One noticed that the sun shone like no sun, that the grass was like no actual grass, that the horse was an incredible horse, that the coloring of the picture was coloring never seen on sea or land, that the details were unreal almost without exception. Nevertheless, artists said that this was a true picture. If it was, why was it ? It was because there was one real thing in the picture — the face of Napoleon — so real that the unreality of the other details made but more true this

one reality. One may go farther and say that the unreality of the details had a purpose. It was not alone the actual Napoleon of history ; it was Napoleon the devastator, the dominator, that claimed the notice of the artist's mind. And what was the picture ? It was a symbolic utterance as well as a portrayal, for this figure was not alone Napoleon. It was as Death the great devastator ; Death on the pale horse, dominating and devastating. Such a presentation was the historical romance as Dumas gave it. History to him was for the utterance of some great symbolic thought. The Athos, Porthos, Aramis, D'Artagnan, of Dumas crystallize into an ideal of daring, courage, loyalty, such as has long moved men.

Such in its earliest perfection was the historical romance. I say "it was," for the day of the romance passes. The great god Verity has his revenges. The heavy hand of Darwin has been laid on literature no less certainly than on science. There are historical romances after Dumas ; but the historical romance has no longer its unfettered free-

dom. Indeed, it is notable how brief is the list of historical novels outside of those written by Scott and Dumas. Almost on the fingers of the hand can we count the important historical novels. If we name Bulwer with "Rienzi" and the "Last Days of Pompeii"; Charles Kingsley with "Westward Ho!"; Georg Ebers with the "Egyptian Princess" and others; Thackeray with "Henry Esmond,"—we have named in these four persons almost all the earlier writers of great note who have written historical novels. Should we add to this list the narratives of G. P. R. James and the Indian tales of Cooper, or should we class such novels as "Romola," "John Inglesant," and the "Cloister and the Hearth" among the historical novels, even then our list is but a short one. Certainly, though short, this is not an unimportant list, for the world would be the poorer to a degree incalculable if the few books we have named were to be stricken from the list of its literary possessions. Yet any one will note, as he reads the list of four of the principal examples,—the "Last Days

of Pompeii," "Westward Ho!" "Henry Esmond," the "Egyptian Princess," — that the day of irresponsible romance is gone when these works stand for the historical novel. Its youth is past; the duties of maturity are upon it. Perhaps of its whole history we may make three stages; the stage of romantic and dramatic suggestion as illustrated in Scott and Dumas; the stage of philosophized rehabilitation as illustrated in Bulwer and Ebers; and the stage of imaginative interpretation, the latest and best, as illustrated in Thackeray. Scott and Dumas subordinated history to romance; Bulwer and Ebers made brave effort to give true history, philosophized into coherency and fashioned into the semblance of a novel; Thackeray undertook, in "Henry Esmond," to give such an imaginative interpretation of the significant events of history as should at once make vivid the actual, and suggest the ideal, emotional life. Scott and Dumas made history the bondmaiden of romance; Bulwer and Ebers made historical investigation the companion of romance; Thackeray made history the master

of romance. These are the three stages of the evolution of the historical novel. In the middle stage of this evolution comes Sir Edward Lytton Bulwer. Though his best known historical novels, "Rienzi" and the "Last Days of Pompeii," were actually written ten years before Dumas began his romances, and only two years after Scott had died, yet Bulwer comes in the middle stages of the evolution. For there is distinct indication of advance toward maturity in the historical novel as written by Bulwer. "Rienzi" and the "Last Days of Pompeii" are not mere romances. In them the historical spirit distinctly guides the novelist's art. Bulwer, as he himself states in the preface to "Rienzi," aims at something more than the mere gathering of sufficient historical details to give scenery and romantic atmosphere to his romance. The "Last Days of Pompeii" is an attempt to reconstruct the history of the time completely, and to present that history in relation to an individual life. "Rienzi" goes even farther, and gives a problem of a soul in conflict with its environment. It is a more modern scientific spirit modifying

the new historical novel when that historical novel was yet scarcely two decades old. In Bulwer's novels the history is accurate; there is harmony between the character and event; there is formal statement of motive and action; there is a problem; there is analysis of character. To present honestly the actual conditions, to rehabilitate the life of the day, to present a life complete in every detail, and sincerely true to the facts of history, no matter if fidelity injure the effect of the novel as a novel—this is the method of Bulwer, of Ebers, of George Eliot in the historical portions of "Romola," of Charles Reade in the "Cloister and the Hearth." It is the second stage in the progress of the historical novel.

But it is in Thackeray's "Henry Esmond" that we get the final and the most modern stage of the historical novel. We may call this stage the imaginative interpretation of history. It is more modern than the pains-taking philosophical rehabilitations of Bulwer, far more modern than the dramatic sketches of Dumas, or the romantic groupings of Scott. In the first chapter of this book I set

forth the theory that if one study the development of fiction it will be found to follow a law; the law that the development is from the external, the romantic, the objective, to the internal, the actual, the subjective. If this be true, Dumas and Scott should be the historians of the outer life, Thackeray should be the historian of the inner life. And are they not? Is not the whole novel of the "Three Musketeers" lived in the open air? Can one think of Athos, Porthos, Aramis, or D'Artagnan without a picture of the external, of weapons, swords, steeds, equipment? The novel is breezy, noisy, jovial, militant, outspoken. And in Scott, have we not always scenery, costumes, lakes, islands, expeditions, have we not tendency always outward? "The interest of Scott's novels," says one writer, "lies in the numerous adventures—the deer hunting in the mountains, the minstrels, bards; in the MacIvors; in the scene in Donald Bean Lean's Cave: in the singing of Flora MacIvor on the side of the mountain. But the interest in Thackeray's novels lies in the development of the character, in the life of the spirit, in the

natural sorrow, joy, and pain that have been and may be again." Let one recall the opening of Waverley, where we have the genealogical tree, the description of "Waverley honor," of the coach-and-six, of the attendants, of the externals of the hero's childhood? And then let him remember the opening of Esmond—a room in an English country house and sad little Harry Esmond all alone with his human longings for love and companionship, awaiting in anxious expectation the coming of the new Lord Castlewood. Let one recall the close of Waverley with the feast at which the "dinner was excellent. Saunderson attended in full costume. The cellars were stocked with wine which was pronounced superb, and it had been contrived that the Bear of the Fountain, in the courtyard, should, for that night only, play excellent brandy punch." And then let him remember the close of Esmond : "Love *vincit omnia*; is immeasurably above all ambition, more precious than wealth, more noble than name. He knows not life who knows not that ; he hath not felt the highest faculty

of the soul who hath not enjoyed it." Try it where one may, the novel of Scott and Dumas is the novel of the external life; the novel of Thackeray is the novel of the soul. Scott and Dumas founded the historical novel; Thackeray brings it to its most complete form.

Yet though I say the historical novel is in its most modern, most developed, most complete form in Thackeray, I by no means mean to say that the most evolved historical novel will be, or is, the only prevalent form when once developed. In evolution it by no means happens that the earlier always vanishes as the later appears. If it be true that man is an evolved anthropoid from a protoplasm, jellyfish, or simian, we still may have the jellyfish, the protoplasm, after we have the man. The novel of Dumas is with us to-day in many tales of romantic adventure. (The novel of Scott is with us to-day in many a story of Mediæval days or of border life.) It is with us,—and may it be always with us,—and yet it is present with a difference. There is a modernness in the tales not found in Scott and Dumas. They are no longer irre-

sponsible; the hero has a conscience. They are no longer pure romance; one can read them with a map. We have no longer a complete hero; we have a hero in process of development. Conscience has come into the book, geographical realism has come into the book, conflict between love and duty has come in, hesitation and doubt have entered. A romance of realism though it be, in strongest presentation, it yet gives us, not the hero, but the man. The seriousness of modernness has come upon the historical romance.

Such was the historical novel. It is easy to trace its history. It is easy to point out the gradual triumph of the great god Verity. But it is not so easy to predict its future. For the Historical Novel has one foe, and that foe is History. When history is completely written it will be greater than any fiction. It is more than likely that historical treatment in the distant future will be either pure romance or pure history.

CHAPTER IV

THE ROMANTIC NOVEL

THERE are probably no words in the vocabulary of literary, artistic, or æsthetic criticism more common to our usage and less exact of apprehension than the words *romance*, *romantic*, *romanticism*. To give an exact definition of what one means by romanticism, to give anything more than a vague idea of the notion one intends to convey when he uses the word romantic, to give a single, definite conception to a reader by the use of the word romance, is impossible. No two literary authorities, no two artistic or æsthetic critics, are quite agreed in the usage of either of these words. If I had named this chapter "Romanticism in Fiction," the word romanticism would probably have suggested a notion to each reader slightly other than that which would have been suggested to his neighbor. We clearly understand what one means

by the Historical Novel, by the Novel of Personality, by the Problem Novel, by the Novel of Purpose; but we enter a region of vagueness, of indefiniteness, when we speak of the "Romantic Novel."

Yet the thing hinted at by the terms romance, romantic, romanticism, is certainly not new. That which is at the basis of it is as old as history. The wandering of the Israelites in the wilderness, led by the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night toward a goal but dimly known, is an early story of romantic exploration. One may fancy it repeated in the wandering toward a revelation of the heroic in life through the desert of the Middle Ages, led by the pillar of cloud by day of the German hero-epic, and the pillar of fire by night of the French chivalric romances. The legend of the Peri, the immortal and innocent daughters of the fallen angels, at the gates of Paradise, pointing with wands the pure in heart toward the pathway to that heaven to which they themselves are forever to be strangers, is a romantic story; the legend of Lilith, the fabled love wife of

Adam, is a legacy of romantic fancy; Cain driven from home, an endless wanderer, is a romantic type. The story of Abelard and Héloïse is a romantic tale of loyalty and non-fruition; the story of Francesca da Rimini is a romantic tale of hopeless and undying love; the Knights of the Round Table, in fiction, are romantic figures; Savonarola, in history, is a romantic figure; Hamlet, scarcely less historical, is an embodiment of the romantic. The "Midsummer Night's Dream" of Shakespeare, the "Arcadia" of Sidney, the *Orlando Furioso* of Ariosto, are literary embodiments of the romantic. If we cannot define the word, we can trace without hesitation the existence of that for which the word stands as a symbol. The romantic is as old as the historic.

Old as it is, however, the words we use for it—romance, romantic, romanticism—are comparatively modern. The word *romance* looks back no farther than the Middle Ages when a Romance, or *Roman*, was a translation from the *Lingua Romana*, from the Latin tongue. The *Roman* was that which had come from

afar, which was foreign to the language, the custom, the habit, and the nature of the day; which was brought into common life from a completer, more complex, life. The word was first given to the poems of the Troubadours and the minstrels, to acknowledge the fact that the substance of these poems had come over from the Roman tongue. The poetic romances of the Middle Ages were translations of the life of one civilization into the custom and the language of another. So the essence of the word is translation. A romance is something transferred, brought from afar. A romance is something foreign; it is something hinting of a life better, completer, or nobler, than the present life; dimly known; detached from, hoped for yet never expected in, the present life.

The essence of the word then is translation. But there are translations and translations. Latin is translated in our schools; Enoch was translated to an eternal home. Something of a difference may separate two conditions, the essence of both of which is the one notion of translation. So there is every grade

of romantic possibility hinted at when we use the word *romance*; and the word *romanticism* has every shade of meaning. If we would get a definite idea of the meaning of the word *romantic*, we must trace it inexorably in its usage. The first step toward definiteness for the word will be one of limitation. Fortunately the law of evolution holds also with words; their progress is from the external to the internal. If we follow the history of any word we can usually trace it, in its progress through literary criticism, from an external and general to an internal and specific meaning. We use the word *romantic* in at least four senses. In its first, most general, most popular, sense, the *romantic* is the opposite of the commonplace. We speak of the *romantic* fancies of youth; of *romantic* ideals, as of the notions of love in a cottage, of perfect lovers, and of flawless men; of existence translated above the sordid necessities of life, above the prose of daily living, up to the poetic regions where dwell eternal and unchanging youth and love. Of the earth, earthy—that is the prose thought of daily

procedure ; to higher things soars the romantic fancy. In this general popular sense, which is the ordinary, unscientific usage of current allusion, the romantic simply means transference of desire, away from commonplace, stay-at-home, ordinary contentedness, into regions of rash attempt and vague longing. We may, I think, take this notion of departure from the commonplace, ordinary prose experiences of life, as the basis of all the more general meanings of the words romantic and romanticism.

From this first meaning it is but a short leap to the second, which presents the romantic as the opposite of the probable. To the romantic tale of the Middle Ages, say we, belongs the hippocriff with the head and claws of a griffin and the hoofs and tail of a horse ; belongs the winged horse on which Astolpho reaches the Court of Prester John ; belongs the magic horn which brings panic to the foe ; belongs the charmed shield which makes the knight invisible. To romance belong the fountains of love, donors of friendliness and of hospitality to whomsoever drinks ; to romance belongs all

the machinery of fancy. That which the logical reason will not sanction, but which the desiring fancy longs for, is the customary course of action in the romance. Romanticism in this sense, scarcely more specific than the first, is translation from the probable into the fancy-haunted regions of the longed-for.

But as we come to modern days we may look for more specific and critical connotations of the words romantic and romanticism. Of such we have two: the romantic as opposed to the literal, as illustrated in the romanticism of Novalis and Tieck in Germany, and in the symbolism of Rossetti and the Preraphaelites in England; and the romantic as opposed to the formal, as illustrated in the romanticists of 1830 in France. The first of these later and more specific meanings gives the romantic as the antithesis of the literal. This romanticism is a religious, literary, artistic expression of the mystic symbolism of the Mediæval days of Heinrich Suso, of Dr. Tauler, of Meister Eckhart. It is a mysticism in which the subjective constituent of religion or of art over-balances the objective ; in which the symbolic

representation transcends the literal. Of this romanticism Novalis and Tieck in Germany are the exponents in the province of art and literature; Rossetti and the Preraphaelites in England are the exponents in the province of art and religion. "The evangel of this romanticism in England," says Vaughn, "is the 'Sartor Resartus' of Carlyle." Its recent apostle was Ruskin. An excellent illustration in art may be found in the pictures of Holman Hunt, of Burne-Jones, of William Blake, of Dante Gabriel Rossetti; in the "Light of the World" at Keble College in Oxford, and the "Annunciation" at the National Gallery in London; or in the Blake pictures at the Art Museum in Boston. The fundamental idea of this romanticism is a translation of the literal into a symbolism whose esoteric meaning is wholly revealed only to those whose intensity of spiritual life permits them to see beyond the veil. The method of this romanticism is the method of saturation of the prosaic subject with essence of the ideal. It is a gospel of symbols. The typical symbol of German romantics was the blue flower of Novalis. This

blue flower was the symbol of the poet's desire. For it poets might long ; of it the fragrance might, in most supreme moments, be inhaled ; of its presence the rapture might be, sometimes, dimly known. But in this world it could never be found ; it was the absolute ideal, ever beyond reach. Though if this blue flower, this symbol of the ideal, should be discovered, the line between this world and the next would vanish, and all things would come into the clearness of absolute existence.

Such are two of the most common connotations of meaning of the general word romantic, and one of the rather more specific denotations of the word romanticism in art, religion, and certain fields of literature. In the special field of literary criticism, however, one can go farther and obtain a fourth and still more definite sense in which one may properly use the words romantic and romanticism. In such usage, which is common in literary criticism at the present time, romanticism is opposed to formalism, and the romantic is the method and the attitude most contrary to the classical. A purely classical work is a portrayal

strictly in consonance with a law of form, motive, or relation. A classical attitude of mind is an attitude of acceptance of laws of form, motive, or relation. Behind the classical work seems to stand a fixed ideal, a recognized ideal of proportion, grace, fitness, harmony. The acceptance of such an ideal as a guide indicates a classical spirit; of it the outward indication is order, harmony, system, light. The classical drama thus gives presentations in rigid, regular form, under bondage to the Unities, under subjection to the canons of an authority, such as Aristotle. Under such a definition the "Alchemist" of Ben Jonson is a classical drama, the "Midsummer Night's Dream" of Shakespeare is a romantic drama. So a classical work of architecture is a work whose proportions can be reduced to a complete formula; a classical drama is such a drama as will follow precepts of ancient masters, themselves the servants of an accepted and complete tradition. Classicism is born of law; it is nourished by authority; its ideals are known. The classicist is the conservative in literature. In opposition

to all this, the cardinal notion of romanticism is not acceptance but rejection. Romanticism rejects the literal and seeks the allegorical ; it leaves the seen and searches the unseen ; it casts aside the evident and seeks a symbol of the deeper thought. Romanticism is born of dissatisfaction with the canons of authority ; it constantly and consciously searches for a new law in place of that which has ruled. So, to the classicist, the romantic work lacks proportion, harmony, finish. "Shaks-peer wanted arte," said Ben Jonson, because Shakespeare did not frame his dramas in accordance with the precepts of dramatic law. Classicism is cultured acceptance ; romanticism is unschooled desire.

Hence it comes about that romantic works develop certain external characteristics by virtue of this departure from the formal, under pressure of desire. Reaction, picturesqueness, subjectivity, say the writers of many admirable books, in one or another form of phrase and grouping, are romantic qualities. It is natural that these, among others, should be the external characteristics

of romantic expression. The essence of classicism is the subjection of the individual artist to the mandates of an artistic law, the subjection of the individual citizen to the mandates of an established society. The essence of romanticism is the freedom of the individual; and subjectivity becomes a characteristic of certain romantic works. And again, nature, in the classical view, is the orderliness of the external world in its most cultivated form. But nature, as the unschooled desire would seek it, is the picturesqueness of exceptional association; and so picturesqueness becomes a characteristic of certain romantic works. The method of romanticism is a departure from the contemporaneous; and hence we have such a searching of the past as hints at something very like reaction. It is departure, translation, desire, that marks the romantic work. Romanticism departs, from the ordinary, from the accepted, from the contemporaneous, from the probable, from the reasonable. "Realism," says one writer, "gives us the pleasure of recognition; classicism the pleasure of satisfaction; romanticism the pleasure of surprise."

And yet it does more, for he is but a superficial observer who does not find beneath these external characteristics of romanticism a deeper utterance than a mere cry of restless negation. The greater romantic works of the world, the greater periods of romanticism, speak of more than mere restlessness and vague longing for novelty. First the external of war and strife, and then the mind's desire. First the *Sturm und Drang*, then romanticism — this is the historical sequence. It is out of the civil strife of Florence that is born the immortal work of Dante; it is after the Reformation and the death struggle of two religions in England that we get the "Arcadia," that we get Spenser, and Shakespeare; it is after the wars in Germany that we get Schlegel, Tieck, Novalis, and Goethe; it is after the French Revolution and Napoleon that we get Alfred de Musset, Lamartine, Victor Hugo. Romanticism is more than a mere external. It is a voice crying in the wilderness. A romantic work is a record of exploration in the realm of the material, the mental, or the spiritual, in search of an ideal. The true romance

is a suggestion and a prophecy. The wandering of the three wise men of old, journeying under the guidance of a point of brightness in the Eastern sky, was a journey of high romance in that it prophesied the revelation which was to follow. So every romance is a wandering toward a dim ideal. ✓ Romanticism in the Mediæval tales searches the records of chivalry in quest of an ideal of heroism. Romanticism in the "Arcadia" searches the dimly known in quest of a possible new ideal of love; romanticism in the "Sorrows of Werther" searches the human mind in quest of a new ideal of individuality; romanticism in "Notre Dame" searches the tumultuous past in quest of a possible regenerator of society. Romanticism in its noblest expression is a departure from law, from fact, from harmony, from perspective, in quest of a new law, of a new fact, a new harmony, a new perspective. In its best exemplification a romantic creation is an altar to an Unknown God.

No doubt all this may seem to be what Bacon would call a "high speech" when applied to any existing exemplification of romanticism

n fiction ; and truly it is too " high " a speech to apply to any novel. Romanticism has never been in best exemplification in the novel. It is only in poetry, in art, in religious expression, in music, that the noblest virtues of romanticism can be embodied. The completeness of the novel form is a barrier to the vagrant fancy. The novel is a record of life, of human life, under stress of emotion,—of human lives influenced by, and influencing, other human lives through emotion. The novel demands actual experience, human relations, as its basis. But the romance proper is the wandering of a solitary soul, apart and afar from associated life, away from influences, into the regions of poetry and fancy. A completely historical novel seemed impossible because of the limitations which history placed upon the novel ; in its turn a completely romantic novel seems impossible because of the limitations which the novel-form places upon the romantic fancy. It is a wandering within a limited space that we must get if we are to have a coherent novel of romantic exploration. The novel is stable and concrete ; the romantic is fluid and pass-

ing. High religious expression, as in the symbolism of religious mystics, high artistic expression, one may find as the natural language of the romanticist; but such expression as we find in fiction is rarely a high exemplification. The romantic mood is too vague and dreamy to find fit vehicle in so work-a-day a form as the novel; the romantic is essentially a poetic rather than a prose attitude. So, when we study characteristic romantic novels, such as, "The Sorrows of Werther" of Goethe, and the *Notre Dame* of Victor Hugo, we find abundant opportunity to question their excellence, considered merely as novels. They have plenty of faults. Yet it is a well-settled canon in criticism that the greatest literary works, like the greatest lives, are not those which have the fewest faults, but those which have the greatest number of qualities. The works have the qualities of the romantic, and, therefore, are fit illustrations. Moreover, the romantic belongs, by historical association, to fiction; it had right of absolute possession for fifteen hundred years, and is still in evidence to-day. We may, therefore, prop-

early make a special study of the romantic novel.

Of this romantic novel we may distinguish three stages. These stages are: the romantic in fiction, as represented by the Greek and Mediæval tales of external life, which may be called the romances of physical adventure; the romantic in fiction, as represented in "Vathek," the "Castle of Otranto," and the "Mysteries of Udolpho," which may be termed the romances of mental adventure; the romantic in fiction as represented in the "Sorrows of Werther," the "Notre Dame," and the "Wilhelm Meister," which may be named the romances of spiritual adventure. The first stage, shown in romances of physical adventure, goes back to the Greek tale, which was a record of the travels, adventures and accomplishments of a hero somewhat agitated by emotional desire. At the basis of the Greek romance was a love motive, scarcely adequate to the demands upon it, much assisted by a traveller's motive of restless curiosity. In the Middle Age fiction a motive of chivalric heroism comes in; the story of adventure is under

guidance of an ideal. There is little enough coherence in the story as a story; but the ideal of the knight fighting for his love never vanishes. It is customary to divide these romances into groups. In such division, the first group would be the Greek novel, which is represented for us in a few tales of adventure, all of them antedating the sixth century; the second group would be the Mediæval romances of chivalry and adventure; the third group would be the pastoral fictions of Italy and Spain; and the fourth group would be the heroic and the mock-heroic romances of the latest days of Mediæval time. It is the history of fiction, rather than the history of the novel, that we are considering when we study these romances. They are fine tales of external adventure, antedating that more subjective, but completer form of fiction, which we call the novel.

The second stage of romanticism in fiction was the *fin de siècle* novel in England one hundred years ago. It is the romanticism of mental excitement. We have gone from the mere physical explorations of the Middle Age romance when we reach these novels. True

enough it is that mysteries, strange experiences, enchanted groves, haunted castles—all such externals of horror and interest—are presented in the tale, and are its special machinery; but these externals are present only to arouse the mind. It is not merely the external supernatural, it is the supernatural affecting or influencing the human mind that is presented. These works are really novels because in each is presented the experiences of a human soul in imaginary contact with the mysterious supernatural. From the "Castle of Otranto," one of the earliest of the class (1764), to "The Italian" and "The Mysteries of Udolpho," thirty years after, almost the latest of the greater works of this special sort, we have really but one motive; that motive is the attempt of the human mind to solve some mystery of life beyond all human experience. Crude enough now the machinery of these novels seems to us. We recall how easily Miss Austen satirizes it all in "Northanger Abbey" in her charming story of the timorous maiden, quivering with fear over fancied horrors hidden in a harmless, unused section of the Abbey. It is

easy for any of us now to find these marvels food rather for mirth than for reflection. The hero, imprisoned in a monstrous helmet in the Castle of Otranto; the gigantic hand in armor seen on the uppermost banister of the staircase in the dim light of the winter gloaming; the swords, the skeletons, the groans; the statue that sweats great drops of blood,—these things do not alarm us now. In Beckford's "*Vathek*," the mute, one-eyed negresses pouring oil on heaps of innocent victims, sacrificed to the subterranean gods, do not awaken emotion; even a masterly though physical picture of hell in this same "*Vathek*" languidly moves us. And with Mrs. Radcliffe one must get into very close sympathy, or the unreality of the means will hinder rather than help emotion. If so sympathizing, however, one can find interest in the study of Mrs. Radcliffe's latest works, "*The Italian*," the "*Romance of the Forest*," and the "*Mysteries of Udolpho*." Of these the first named is the finest and the last the best known. The method of one is the method of all. There is a maiden with azure eyes, a lithe and willowy form, and locks

whose auburn radiance rivals the glint of sunlight on the mountain tops in the last glow of evening. The maiden is confined in a castle on some inaccessible, rocky shore. The shadow of a crime, committed by some dead ancestor, hangs over her. Mysterious visitants haunt her prison. She finds a subterranean passage to a gloomy abbey, where winding corridors lead on to chambers peopled thick with horrors. Panels slide in the casement; trap-doors open in the floor; living men step from pictures on the walls; behind the curtain is a skeleton with a rusty dagger by its side. Blood-stained papers are found lying in a massive oaken chest, and the clammy hands of dead men touch the maiden, as by the light of a flickering, just-expiring candle she reads the record of the long hid crimes. All this is the machinery of terror. It is the terror of the human mind probing the mysterious unknown. It is later than the Mediæval romantic motive in that it is of the mind rather than of the body that we have the record. It is the romantic in that it is a departure from the contempor-

neous, from the accepted, from the probable, in search of a new emotion. This novel of wild romance is in some sense a prophecy in that it foreshadows the novel of problem. Absurd we call it now after one hundred years of wise instruction, but it was a fit forerunner of the investigating, introspective nineteenth century. It was the early novel of the unseen world. To the classicist the world is a scheme; to the romanticist the world is a mystery. It is, perhaps, due to these novels that since their day classicism in fiction has never held exclusive sway.

Quite contemporaneous with this remarkable expression in England, though in another country, was the third stage of the romantic in fiction, which may be called the romanticism of spiritual life. It is first found in connection with the great romantic movement of the last quarter of the eighteenth century in Germany. For our purpose I take, as a good illustration of it, Goethe's *Die Leiden des jungen Werther* (1774). I choose this novel because it is an early and typical example in German fiction, and properly belongs, there-

fore, to the illustration of romanticism, as exemplified in the novel. But if this chapter dealt with the whole topic of romanticism, and if I were now to give account of the romantic movement in Germany in its entirety, no doubt I should choose another name than that of Goethe as exemplar. Goethe was by no means a typical representative of the romantic movement. He was too great a genius to be for any lengthened period a representative of any single movement. He was of all movements ; to him all the literary stir of his time and country may be said to look for inspiration and suggestion. He was of the romantic movement in his youth. Indeed, he may be said to have antedated it, and later to have outlived it, before, in the minds of other men in Germany, it had come to birth. Goethe's first romantic novel was written in 1774, when Coleridge and Schlegel, and Tieck, and Novalis were babies in the cradle, the oldest of them not yet two years old. When, twenty-one years later the apostles of romanticism found voice, Goethe wrote *Wilhelm Meister's Lehrjahre*,

so far in advance of the views of these apostles that they clamored against Goethe as an apostate. And when twenty-six years later still (1821) the voices of most of the apostles of romanticism in Germany were hushed in eternal silence, Goethe wrote *Wilhelm Meister's Wanderjahre*, and again a master hand touched into continued life the dying impulse. In these three works,—“Werther,” the first, and the second “Wilhelm,”—Goethe sums up the beginning, the continuance, the completion of romantic thought in Germany. In them he creates two influencing and eternal personages—Werther the emotional idealist, Wilhelm Meister the seeker and wanderer.

When Goethe wrote “Werther” he was a youth of twenty-five years, in the first flush of early emotion. His boyhood to his sixteenth year had been spent at his home in Frankfort; he then had three intensely stirring years at the University of Leipzig; two waiting years at home recovering from illness; one final and arousing university year at Strassburg; then three years of early achievement in law and literature at Frankfort and

at Wetzlar. He had come under French influence at Leipzig, and under the influence of Herder, Rousseau, and the men of *Sturm und Drang* at Strassburg. He had loved twice; once had lost; and once had rejected a continuance. In speaking of so great and so original a genius as Goethe, one must use such terms as influences and impulses with less definiteness of insistence than in application to lesser men. Yet one may fairly say that four influences made Werther possible. One was the influence of that group of men whom collectively we take to illustrate the early Storm and Stress. Klopstock, in 1748, had published his "Messiah"; Wieland, in 1762, had translated Shakespeare; Herder was the bosom friend of Goethe. The second impulse was that of Rousseau, exerted indirectly through his friend and admirer, Herder; exerted directly and powerfully through his *Nouvelle Héloïse*, published fourteen years before the "Sorrows of Werther." The third impulse was the opposition and applause which Goethe's own *Götz von Berlichingen* had aroused the previous year; in the fierce days

of youth applause and opposition are incentives of almost equal power. And the fourth impulse was the love of Goethe for Charlotte Buff, betrothed to Kastner, and so resigned by Goethe.

The story of Werther, told in the letters of the hero, which record his life and loves, his dreams, his aspirations, and his resignation, is familiar enough, for the work is a classic to-day in a dozen languages. Werther, persisting in his search for an ideal emotional life, became the model of dreamers and lovers. The romance is a record of the pilgrimage of a soul searching for ideal conditions of emotional life. It is not gratified love that Werther longs for ; it is ideal love. It is partly that, since he must love Charlotte, Charlotte should be Charlotte, that makes the hopelessness of the situation. When Thackeray, in his clever little ballad, tells how Charlotte,

“ When she saw the body
Borne before her on a shutter,
Like a well-conducted person,
Went on cutting bread and butter,”

he sets forth the eternal pathos of impossible conditions. Werther is the type of a wanderer

seeking an ideal love ; Charlotte is the type of contentedness and placid complacency. There must in any case be either the eternal longing or the acceptance of eternal incompleteness. So Werther stands for the *Weltschmerz*, the world-sadness of incomplete relation. It is not happiness that Werther longs for ; it is the absoluteness of ideal love. With quenchless yearning he dreams, and longs that awaking in the likeness of perfection he shall still be unsatisfied. Three ideals stand before him : an ideal of the duty one owes to one's nature ; an ideal of the duty one owes to one's future ; an ideal of the duty one owes to one's emotions. Werther dies rather than forfeit his ideals. He owes it to himself to be complete in duty, complete in personality, complete in happiness of relation ; or failing that, to wander with the Sirenos, the Liliths, the Peris, the Hamlets, and the Francesca da Riminis forever toward a greater incompleteness somewhere in the fathomless beyond.

We have gone on to a much later stage of romantic expression when we come, twenty years later, to the "Wilhelm Meister." Wil-

helm Meister is more than a romantic wanderer. He goes far on the road to attainment of the notion of his ideal, though never shall he reach it, and only slightly will he strive to put it in the embodiment of external action. It is a later expression than romanticism when the wanderer becomes the reformer. There is an essential difference in the two types. The wanderer seeks an unknown ideal; the reformer seeks to embody a known ideal. Savonarola in failure, seeking hopelessly an ideal of religion, of faith, of action, is a romantic figure; Martin Luther in successful, definite action, though heroic, is not romantic. The life of every romanticist is a record of exploration in search of an ideal; the life of every reformer is an endeavor to embody a known ideal. The real romanticists, the seekers, such as Tieck and Novalis, the Hamlets, the Werthers, wander to the end. What the world calls greater men, the Goethes, the Victor Hugos, the Ruskins, in their later years, finding some ideal, strive for its embodiment. So Wilhelm Meister, attaining the notion of a complete individual life through

abnegation, for the sake of the completer lives of other men, marks a later stage of the romantic novel. The story of Werther is the record of a hopeless pilgrimage in search of an ideal of individuality; the story of Wilhelm Meister is the record of a hopeful pilgrimage in search of a method of self-development. Werther remains to the end a mere wanderer; Wilhelm Meister gains his self-completeness through abnegation. It is in some sense a problem and an answer. Goethe the romantic dreamer has become Goethe the philosopher.

Yet, perhaps, a better illustration of the growth of the wanderer-thought to the hero-thought is in the *Notre Dame de Paris* of Victor Hugo, the outcome of the French romantic movement of 1830, as contrasted with *Les Misérables*, of thirty years later. It would be pleasant to linger in the presentation of the poetic days of Lamartine, of George Sand, of Mérimée, of Musset, of Gautier, of the earlier years of Victor Hugo. To this period belongs the *Notre Dame*, that mixture of heroism and unreality, of ill-deserved attain-

ment and still more undeserved disaster, that mixture of the ideal and the grotesque, of the fancifully lovely and the horribly ugly, which has been called the epic of the unnatural. As one reads one seems to hear a voice from hopeless chaos. Yet even in this work the romantic searcher hints at his vision of the goal he seeks. It is romantic in its insistence that the individual is the basal unit of society, that blessings come up from below and not down from above, that excellence is an up-springing, not a gracious gift, that virtue is not an endowment, but an inspiration. Yet we have a greater message when thirty years later we pass from Hugo the romanticist to Hugo the reformer. Jean Valjean, in *Les Misérables*, giving his life for others, is the answer to the question flung behind him by the despairing spirit of Werther. The ideal has come to its embodiment; the wanderer has become the hero.

It was one hundred years ago that Mrs. Radcliffe wrote "The Mysteries of Udolpho." Two generations later Blackmore wrote the "Lorna Doone." In the one, the unknown is

a terror to the shuddering mind; in the other, the unknown is a charm to the exploring fancy. Reading the earlier, one is in the terrors of the darkness of that black hour which precedes the wintry dawn, peopled with stealthy shadows, haggard assassins, spirits of evil and destruction. Reading the later, one is in the half-light of a summer twilight, peopled with suggestion of unknown delight, tripping fancies, happy concealments, spirits of fantasy and hope. Over it all is the atmosphere of the ending of a summer afternoon. We wander still, as the romantic always wanders, through half concealments and dimly indicated pathways. But we wander toward desire lighted by anticipation, thrilled with expectation. We shall in our wandering sometime find our hope.

Yet one may not predict that in the novel romantic desire will always find its fullest expression. For the great god Verity has given to every utterance of fiction its own special foe. The novel of personality has its special foe and that foe is life; the very opportunities of development of personality in modern, complex life make its presentation in the pages of a

novel an almost hopeless task. The historical novel has its special foe, and that foe is history. In like fashion the romantic novel has its foe. That foe is science. It is not the romantic fancy of the idealist in fiction which now probes the dark and secret things of life ; it is the scientist who searches the hidden things. The Roentgen rays of the scientist are to-day searching the darkness of the unknown ; the physicists of the world are its most romantic explorers.

Even in the past romanticism has never been at its noblest in fiction. It is in art, in religious symbolism, in poetry, rather than in fiction, that the romantic has found most natural utterance. Yet it is certain to be a permanent, if not the noblest, element in fiction. For the romantic wanderer is one of the three great types in literature. Balzac has said that there are three classes of men in the world. There are those who revolt; there are those who struggle; there are those who accept. He who accepts is the classicist ; he who struggles is the hero ; he who revolts is the romanticist. In literature he who revolts is the romantic **wanderer** ; he

who struggles is the knight defender ; he who accepts is the citizen. These are the three eternal types. In the oldest literature of the English tongue, we have three great classes of English poems ; we have the epic of Beowulf ; we have the lyrics of Cynewulf ; we have the biblical poems of Cædmon. Cædmon is the citizen ; Beowulf the hero ; Cynewulf the wanderer. Follow down the centuries and we find these three eternal types : the explorer, the defender, the dweller. We have the citizen in the novel of personality ; we have the hero in the historical novel ; we have the wanderer in the novel of romance. These are eternal types. Though the days of this or of that search may cease, the day of romance will never wholly pass; so long as the soul of man shall grow, the wanderer's quest will never end.

CHAPTER V

THE NOVEL OF PURPOSE

THE novel of purpose is sometimes loosely defined as a story designed to enforce some moral, social, or ethical lesson ; or one which has a purpose of ethical instruction rather than one which aims at purely artistic effect. But literally the novel of purpose is a novel in which all the actions, incidents, and motives, which are grouped into a plot, are so fashioned that the story, as a whole, tends toward the accomplishment of some definite result, such as the establishment of an educational method, or the reformation of a social abuse. If, however, the novel of purpose in this literal interpretation alone should be taken as subject, this chapter would be brief, for the novel of conscious, definite purpose is not common. I compiled, not long since, a reasonably complete list of standard novels, chosen as ex-

amples representing progress from 1740 to the present day,—much like a map or chart of fiction. This list includes only such novels as may properly be called classic examples, and has a total of about two hundred, of which sixty-eight are English, thirty-four are American, forty-eight are German, and fifty are French. In looking through this summary of the history of fiction, it becomes evident at once that the novel of purpose, taking that designation in its literal sense, is an infrequent novel. In the English group there are less than a dozen novels of the first rank which are didactic novels of purpose; in the American group less than a half-dozen novels of the first rank are didactic novels of purpose; and not a much larger proportion in the French or German group. So long as the examination is confined to a consideration of first-rate work, the discovery of examples of this type of novel is difficult. Commencing with the earliest days of fiction we travel a long way down the years before we meet with a single example; scarcely, indeed, can one be found before the middle of the present century.

"Alton Locke" and "Yeast" may be called novels of purpose; "Uncle Tom's Cabin" may be called a novel of purpose; taking in each case the designation with literalness of interpretation. "Yeast" was written in 1848, "Alton Locke" in 1849, "Uncle Tom's Cabin" in 1852; and it is nearly ten years more after these before we come to another equally good example of a novel of purpose in the literal meaning of that term. Even if one goes through a list of novels without critical bias and is liberal in his selection, the list is not very large. Running through English novels, for example, one can name two novels of Charles Kingsley, "Yeast" and "Alton Locke;" three novels of Charles Reade, "Put Yourself in His Place," "Hard Cash," and "Never Too Late to Mend;" parts of three novels of Dickens, "Nicholas Nickleby," "Martin Chuzzlewit," and "Bleak House;" Miss Mulock's "Hannah;" Wilkie Collins's "Man and Wife;" George Eliot's "Daniel Deronda;" Besant's "All Sorts and Conditions of Men;" Mrs. Ward's "Marcella." Here are but eight authors and the reader

cannot readily increase the number, unless, perhaps, he puts in such writings as the moral essays, with leanings toward the novel form, of J. G. Holland, or of Miss Maria Edgeworth. It would appear upon this examination that the novel of purpose is not common in fact. Moreover, in theory, the novel of definite reformatory purpose seems to be an expression of literature involving contradictions of artistic aims. If the novel is to be a record of emotion, of life; or if it is to be an unbiassed, unprejudiced, sincere portrayal of actual conditions, of tendencies stimulated or thwarted by circumstances in life development; or if it is to be an impartial and unprejudiced criticism of life,—then a preconceived theory or a special design of accomplishment is not the condition nor the equipment most favorable to success. So says theory. The honest, unbiassed, unphilosophized portrayal of life-conditions, we say in our easy way, is the novel's mission; and the novel with a message loses its special power just in proportion as it permits itself to become a vehicle for the transmission of a message, no matter how high,

or important, or noble that message. Thus, I think, many of us are tempted to reason. And thus reasoning, we seem to win a quick and triumphant victory for the unphilosophized novel, for the novel which is a transcript of life without aiming to improve, to change, or even to comment upon, existing conditions.

But having won this victory for the autonomy of the novel, I suspect that misgivings begin to creep into our minds because of the apparent completeness of the victory. We have a suspicion that we may have come to a hasty conclusion. We recall many novels not set down in the lists we make which are not definitely for a purpose, but which are yet so saturated with purposefulness that they move as well as inspire us. And we note that literature grows more crowded with novels thus saturated with purpose as the years go on. Before 1840 we find scarcely any novels, save of the class of the moral essays of Miss Edgeworth, or the "Fool of Quality" of Henry Brooke, to which even with liberal interpretation the name "novel of purpose" can be given. But we find that the notion

of purpose attaches in some form, greater or less, to a large proportion of the novels written in the decade beginning with 1890. One begins to suspect that his first induction concerning novels of purpose was hasty ; begins to suspect that it may be with novels as with political systems that —

“Through the ages one increasing purpose runs,
And the thoughts of men are widened with the pro-
cess of the suns.”

It may be that both our definition and our classification of novels of purpose have been narrow. Granting, if one likes, that the didactic novel of purpose is a rare and, perhaps, not a typical form of novel, it yet may be true that purpose is involved in the very idea of the serious novel, and that the study of such manifestations in fiction as can readily be set forth may justly be taken as one of the subjects of our investigations into the art of fiction. In considering it I propose two questions: Does the conscious presence of a didactic motive help or injure the novel as a work of art? What is the true novel

of purpose? And I consider these questions in the light of examples.

For American readers the first or most complete example of the purpose-novel will, of course, be "Uncle Tom's Cabin." To this generation it may be impossible to set forth the reasons of the stir made at its appearance by this novel. It was written half a century ago and we of to-day have passed out of the life which it reflected. Since then the whole relations of the North and South have changed; since then war has burned through the tissue of the questions involved; since then we have seen the passing of the whole civilization depicted in the story. For us of this generation, that novel is merely a picture of a day that is gone. It is notable still, but with no special message for the people of this time. Yet the novel was a conscious novel of purpose; it helped to effect a great work; and it still lives. That it had a conscious purpose I need not argue; that it helped to effect that purpose no one will, I think, dispute. It is too much to say that "Uncle Tom's Cabin" freed the slaves; but

it is not too much to say that it notably advanced the cause of freedom. Written as the second novel of an almost unknown writer, the wife of an excellent but not then famous professor in Bowdoin College, it had no remarkable advantages ; but it roused a nation and made the contest of civilization, then going on in America, a visible, physical fact to mankind. It is easy now, as we read the novel, to find flaws in it ; it is easy to point out defects ; but is not so easy to show whence came its power. Perhaps one may best say that the power came from the intensity of its emotion and from the breadth of its human interest. Yet, besides this, it had a special opportunity ; it gave a picture of a unique civilization ; and it presented a problem of social science greater even than the important instance toward which was directed the burden of its message. Its special opportunity was that it spoke to an aroused people. In the early settlement of a new country ethical questions, even those of great consequence, wait upon material conditions for their solution. The convenience of a system

of bondsmen was extremely apparent; the moral question involved was less pressing than the need of labor. So slaves came into this country. In the great Southern region it was particularly convenient to employ laborers accustomed to the heat of a tropical sun; and since those laborers were at first men almost savage, and the time a less advanced state of civilization, a system of master and servant became a most convenient system. Slavery became established. At the North, where material conditions were less exigent, the system of slavery yielded as notions of morality advanced. At the South the process, immensely hindered by economic obstacles, went on more slowly. Yet the government was based upon the proposition of the equality of man before the law; a system of slavery involved a contradiction; and sooner or later, said the statesman, the irrepressible conflict between the theory of freedom and the condition of slavery was bound to come. In 1850 the time came. A group of antislavery men, a group of abolitionists, noble in intention, though, perhaps, intemperate in utterance, aroused a portion of

the nation. Intellectually, the North was convinced that the time for action was coming. For emotional arousal it waited ; and this was the special opportunity of "Uncle Tom's Cabin." The word stirred the heart of the nation. It did more than this. It outlined vividly the picture of a unique civilization linked with the past and absolutely incompatible with any conceivable present. Putting aside moral considerations, there was much to be said for the system of slavery in the South. It was adapted to local conditions ; it was paternal, even patriarchal ; biblical authority might almost be claimed for it ; domestic happiness in many cases was its result. Of this civilization the picture is given more clearly than in any similar novel. But in addition, the social problem involved was stated so completely that it became the utterance of a nation rather than that of an individual. And so it came about that, great as was the special message, the universal message of that particular novel was even greater. It was not because it helped a social reform a generation ago that it became a classic ;

but because it was so saturated with emotion, so saturated with moral quality, that it had within itself the power of life. It did not become a great novel because it helped the reform ; it helped the reform because it was a great novel. It appeals to-day to the imaginations and the hearts of men though nearly forty years have passed since the last slave trod this soil. It has become a classic because in the treatment it has embalmed a passing civilization ; because it has so embodied it that the composition is a creation ; because in the picturing of this unique civilization it has created unique characters, notable figures, Topsy, Harris, Eva, Uncle Tom, — as familiar and as vivid to most of us as the persons of our own households. It has been translated into almost every language on the globe, and very likely will endure when slavery has become but a name on earth and the special opportunity which gave it birth has been forgotten. Certainly it was a novel of purpose. Yet it does not live because it was a novel of purpose. It was a novel of purpose because it was written by a purposeful woman. But it

was written with flaming pen of intense emotion, and lived because instinct with life.

The study of literature and science is a revelation of coincidences so singular that they seem to imply design. The discovery of a planet by one astronomer follows hard upon a discovery by another astronomer of another planet. The application of an anæsthetic, the discovery of a remedy for a disease, comes simultaneously from different countries. If a great dramatist such as *Æschylus* appears, another great dramatist such as Sophocles bears him company. If a Savonarola is hanged in Italy, a Luther is left alive in Germany. If a Milton writes an epic in poetry, a Bunyan writes an epic in prose. But we should little expect that, if a novel frees the slaves of the Western continent, we should find a novel just before had freed the slaves of an Eastern continent. Perhaps neither statement in baldest form, in most literal form, would be quite the fact. “Uncle Tom’s Cabin” was but one of the influences which led to the freeing of the slaves in America; and the “Annals of a Sportsman,” by Turgénieff, was but one of the

influences that led to the freeing of the slaves in Russia. Yet it is true that in much the same sense that Mrs. Stowe advanced the cause of freedom in America by the purpose-novel "Uncle Tom's Cabin," so Turgénieff advanced the cause of freedom in Russia by his "Annals of a Sportsman." It was his second work, was published in 1846, and is not to-day, probably, his best-known work in America. Very likely we recall "Fathers and Sons," or "Smoke," or "Virgin Soil," or the "Poems in Prose," more quickly than the "Annals of a Sportsman," when the name of Turgénieff comes to mind. It was not, strictly speaking, a novel, but a collection of short stories; to the first of which, "Khor and Kalinuitch," is due the credit of the arousal of Russia. In it Turgénieff did not attack the system of serfdom; he did more than that—he described it. He gave it its death-blow by painting it exactly as it existed, without exaggeration, without extenuation. Like Mrs. Stowe he spoke to an aroused people. Four years before, Gogol's "Dead Souls" had appeared, and in the same year the first ukase, a decree

modifying the condition of the serfs, had been announced. It was to an aroused people that Turgénieff spoke, and the story he told had its reward. It is too much to say of this, as it was too much to say of "Uncle Tom's Cabin," that it freed the serfs; but it is hardly too much to say that when Turgénieff signed the charter for the emancipation of his serfs with the same pen which wrote the "Annals of a Sportsman," he wrote a document of freedom no less in the one than in the other act. It was the handwriting on the wall in the "Annals of a Sportsman" in 1846 which made the final abolishment of serfdom in 1861 seem rather the fulfilment of a prophecy than a novelty of statesmanship. It was a purposeful story when written. Time has made it a story of purpose.

If we undertake a comparison of the "Uncle Tom's Cabin" of Mrs. Stowe with the "Yeast" and the "Alton Locke" of Mr. Charles Kingsley, we shall, I think, find such comparison to result in a complete correspondence in only a few particulars. The dates are practically the same; "Yeast" and "Alton Locke" were pub-

lished in 1848 and 1850, "Uncle Tom's Cabin" in 1852. "Yeast" was the first novel of Charles Kingsley, and "Uncle Tom's Cabin," though the second in fact,—for the "Mayflower," a feeble work long since forgotten, had preceded it,—was the first important novel of Mrs. Stowe. The arousal of emotion in Charles Kingsley led to the portrayals in "Yeast" and "Alton Locke," as the arousal of emotion, the indignation against a great wrong, the vibration of a quivering heart, led to the portrayals in "Uncle Tom's Cabin." Yet, if we compare the two now, impartially, the English work seems slighter and less important. The conditions in England were not conditions of stress and inevitable, fatal conflict, as were the conditions in the United States. As we read "Uncle Tom's Cabin" we are brought face to face with a great race problem, brought face to face with the problem of the harmonization in a social fabric of an essentially superior with an essentially inferior and entirely different race. We have in this problem something more than an incidental encounter with circumstances which are passed. Slavery is gone; but in

some fashion the problem of "Uncle Tom's Cabin," the problem of the relation of two races differing in ancestry, capacity, interests, differing emotionally and intellectually, but compelled to live together, is a problem still with us. It was and is a great problem. Compared with this, the social questions involved in the purpose-novels of Charles Kingsley,—the question of the relation of the employed to the employer, of the laborer to the proprietor, of the apprentice to the master, of the land-tiller to the landowner,—these seem questions for quick decision rather than questions impossible of solution. Read now, after more than fifty years, these novels of Charles Kingsley seem little more than studies of a problem,—studies of the old problem of the relation of power to weakness,—studies gently stimulating, rather than fiercely arousing, the emotions. A direct comparison of "Uncle Tom's Cabin" with the two early works of Charles Kingsley is almost unfair to the English writer. Kingsley had no such great opportunity; he could depict no such unique civilization. Nevertheless, these two novels were

written by a man as much in earnest as was the author of "Uncle Tom's Cabin." "Uncle Tom's Cabin" may be said to have come out of the emotions of a nation and to have voiced the message of a people; the first novels of Charles Kingsley came out of the life of a man and voiced the message of an earnest soul. The story of Charles Kingsley is the story of a life of intense earnestness. When, in 1848, he wrote his first novel, "Yeast," he was twenty-nine, and was rector of the parish church in the little village of Eversley, in Hampshire, where he had then been as curate and rector one-half dozen years; where he was to stay till his death at fifty-five. He was simply a country clergyman preaching to a handful of rustics, serving the uneducated people of a sparsely inhabited country-side. Nevertheless, the name of Charles Kingsley, the author of the "Three Fishers," of "Westward Ho," of "Hereward the Wake," of "Hypatia," is to-day far more honored than the titles of many of his superiors in outward ecclesiastical rank. He was one of the pioneers in that scheme or system, then scarcely worthy

the name of social science, which undertakes to supplement the material with the spiritual in the disposition of the opportunities of social life. It is common enough now for us to hear of the political economist with a conscience, for us to hear of systems of social organization which have for their basis something more than theories of profit and loss, of gain and impairment. But England fifty years ago was just coming to the consideration of these same questions. It was in 1838 that the document known as the people's charter, intended as the basis of a bill to be presented to Parliament, was brought forth. The demand was for a Charter in place of the time-honored, but unwritten, Constitution. This charter demanded a salary for members of Parliament ; demanded the abolition of a property qualification for Parliament ; demanded annual Parliaments ; demanded a new system of equal electoral districts ; demanded vote by ballot ; demanded universal suffrage. This was in 1838. From these demands came Chartism which, as a movement, found its end on Kensington Common in 1848. But though Chartism as a movement

ended, Chartism as an influence endured. Charles Kingsley was a Chartist, a hopeless worker in an unpopular cause, in 1848. But in 1872, three years before his death, he saw the vote by ballot, the most important of the Chartists' demands, granted. England has, by its Reform Act of 1884, granted almost the system of equal electoral districts claimed by the Chartists. Universal suffrage is practically attained now, and in its completeness is predicted as a logical necessity of the early future. So, looking back, — when now, in the fruitage of time, the reforms that seemed so impossible, whose very discussion roused the fierce passions of men, have come, — we find it hard to realize the England of the Chartists. It was an England torn with fierce discussion of social questions, for the settlement of which the years 1849 and 1850, fruitful as they were in outward stir and movement, saw no more important contribution than the two novels of Charles Kingsley.

I shall not stop to recall in full the story of these novels. The story in both is the story of the social and industrial agitation of the

day. "Yeast" is the recital of the story of the wrongs of the agricultural laborer; "Alton Locke" is the recital of the story of the wrongs of the apprentice. The story of Alton Locke is a tragedy. He is the son of a widow, brought up under harsh conditions of intellectual starvation, of poverty, of religious bigotry. Gifted with the sensitive emotions and the spiritual insight of a poet, at fifteen he is apprenticed to a tailor and passes five years in an attic with his needle. His liberality in religious thought parts him from his family; his liberality of view parts him from most of his friends. When the tailor-proprietor dies, his son establishes the contract system—the familiar sweat-shop system of more modern days—and Locke rebels and is discharged. Then begins his new career, at once to earn his living and to raise his fellow-men with his intellectual effort. He advocates the Charter; he arouses opinion against the evils of sweating; he tries to unite people of influence with the working masses against the middlemen and leeches. Soon he has an opportunity of advancement; a dean takes notice of him, and the dean's daugh-

ter seems likely to prove worthy the love he gives her. His poems are published, with the more radical lines stricken out by the dean, and some fame comes to him. He might, perhaps, have had a life of ease. But his heart is with the poor. He goes back to them; he rouses them. Finally he stirs one band beyond control; the men become a mob; they burn a house; and Locke, the unfortunate apparent cause, goes to prison. The book ends as a tragedy. He comes out of prison discouraged. His friends have died; his love has proved unworthy; and he hopelessly starts out to begin life again in the Western continent, whose shores he never sees. All this was a hopeless story, as read in the pages of Charles Kingsley; a story of which the refrain might well have been his own lines:—

“For men must work and women must weep,
And the sooner ‘tis over, the sooner to sleep.”

But it is a hopeful story read to-day. The passion of strenuous effort in these books has burned away the mist and fog of the earlier day. It is too much to say that “Alton

Locke" brought on the political reforms of England—the demands of the Charter, the equal districts, the vote by ballot, the extended suffrage. It is too much to say that "Yeast" or "Alton Locke" freed the apprentice or emancipated the agricultural laborer. But it is not too much to say that they notably advanced the cause of freedom. When the influences are summed up which have made for social and political enlightenment in England, no small share will be found due to these purposeful novels of Charles Kingsley.

Sixteen years after "Alton Locke" was published came a novel whose name at once suggests the earlier work,—"Felix Holt, the Radical," by George Eliot. At first thought there seems a very close correspondence between the two novels. The hero, Felix Holt, is, like Alton Locke, a man of the people; like him he gives up prospects of success for the sake of the poor. The detail of his story, especially in its chief catastrophe, which is the failure of a well-meant effort and which lands Felix in prison, recalls the earlier work with great distinctness; yet "Felix Holt" is both

weaker and stronger than is "Alton Locke." It is weaker as a purpose-novel ; it is not written out of a heart hot with emotion as was "Alton Locke"; it does not burn its message into one with the relentless intensity of the earlier work. In so far it is weaker. But it is, if not stronger, at least completer, because it gives some clearer hint of a solution. "Alton Locke" is the tragedy of a failure, hopeless, grievous ; "Felix Holt" comes as if it were intended to be its sequel. Its message is that through abnegation of the pleasures of the earthly life one may help or save those struggling with the problems of that life. This is the method of "Felix Holt." It is a more hopeful, a more modern, perhaps a greater, message.

The novel of purpose is not a common form with George Eliot. I recall at this moment but one other of her works to which this appellation could properly be given,—that is "Daniel Deronda." It is the attempt at answering the question : "What makes a life worth living?" The question is answered by the portrayal of three characters : a perfectly selfish man in Mr. Grandcourt ; a repent-

ant woman in *Gwendolen Harleth*; a man with a mission in *Daniel Deronda*. The lesson is obvious enough. *Gwendolen* marries Grandcourt, and the failure of a sterile life of self-seeking is the lesson of the tragedy of these two lives. *Daniel Deronda* takes up the mission of the reëstablishment of his people in their former Eastern home, and the glory of his purpose casts a halo over earnest effort.

Yet one may call this rather a study of purpose in life than a novel of purpose. It is not conceivable that George Eliot intended to advance, by this novel, the special mission of *Daniel Deronda*. There is no evidence that this mission was a special design of the author nor that the novel was written for its advancement. The book concerns itself with a life actuated by a purpose, and is the story of a man of purpose. But what the purpose is to be; how wise, or how unwise, are the methods of the special religious patriotism of *Daniel Deronda*; how real or how visionary the scheme of the reëstablishment of the Jews in their former Eastern home,—these questions are but secondary, if suggested to us at all, as we read. The

interest is in the story of a strong, unselfish life in Daniel Deronda, as contrasted with the mistaken life effort of Gwendolen Harleth, and as contrasted with the weak and selfish life of Grandcourt. The lesson, if there is one, is a proposition of life direction, rather than a message of special action. And in so far as there is any suggestion of specialness in the direction of the purpose work of the hero, such suggestion injures rather than helps the novel, by making the message seem special rather than universal. Yet this is a strong work and in no real sense merely a novel of purpose. It is rather a keen, merciless satire upon certain phases of society life with suggestions of nobler methods, and a hint at a larger philosophy of life.

The novels I have thus far discussed have been, for the most part, novels of the heart, — written toward an end, but out of intense emotion. I come now to consider an author concerning whose works one can affirm less confidently. The life of Charles Reade is a life of contradictions. He was a teacher who never taught, a lawyer who never practised,

a college man who took little interest in his college, a dramatist who will be least of all remembered for his dramas, a bachelor who wrote a book against the evils of celibacy. Charles Reade is of the age in which have been the writers I have thus far studied. Turgénieff was born in 1812, Charles Reade in 1814, Mrs. Stowe in 1811, Charles Kingsley and George Eliot in 1819. "Annals of a Sportsman" was published in 1846, "Uncle Tom's Cabin" in 1852, "Never Too Late to Mend" in 1856. It was as if a wave of influence had come upon the novelists of England, and had made novel-expression to be purpose expression in the Fifties. One may, perhaps, claim that the novels of Charles Reade lack sympathy and real emotional arousal, that the characters in the novels of Charles Reade lack reality. But there was no lack of sympathy in his design; and there was no lack of reality in the intent or the attitude of Charles Reade toward his work. The novels of Charles Reade grew out of his life. That life, though not rich in incident, has interest for the student. It was far from being a

dramatic life, but it was certainly the life of a born dramatist, of a combatant ; and it was a life of contradiction. Charles Reade was the son of the lord of the manor of Ipsden, Huntercombe, and of two other manors in the county of Oxford ; but the last notion that would have suited his mind, and the last plan of life he would ever have adopted, would have been the becoming himself lord of a manor. He was graduated at Oxford in 1835 and was elected fellow at Magdalen the same year ; but the least natural life for him would have been a professorial residence at Oxford. Instead of continuing to reside there, following the comfortable custom of two generations ago, he retained his fellowship at Magdalen and studied for the bar in London. He was called to the bar in 1842, which served to him as a signal for abandoning the law. It was not till 1851, when Reade was thirty-seven, that he went back to Oxford, and then only because compelled to come to act as vice-president of his college. In Oxford he wrote "*Never Too Late to Mend*," which was the first of his distinctively purpose-novels. It is

certain that Charles Reade was a born fighter, and this novel of purpose, "Never Too Late to Mend," thrills as with the trumpet of one going forth to battle. In form it seems to be the union of three tales,—a story of love; a story of the adventures of two Australian gold diggers; and a story of a mismanaged prison. In construction, these three stories seem to lack completeness of coördination. If this is true it is not at all because Charles Reade lacked the power to make a perfect novel plot; it is because his dramatic mind demanded the foremost position for the expression of the evils of prison management. The book is an attack; it brought forth rejoinders. It is hard to say to-day just what influence the book had upon the reformation of the prisons, but certain it is that in England the prisons are reformed; and the first and greatest attack upon them, the fiercest presentation of their evils in literature, is this novel of Charles Reade.

This was in 1856. In 1860 he wrote a far greater work: "The Cloister and the Hearth." It is with some hesitation that I class this

work as a novel of purpose. Probably to most of us in this country the purpose in the novel makes little appeal ; and yet it is clear that the story of Gerard the hermit has in it more than the suggestion of an attitude toward the doctrine of celibacy for devotees, and makes an intended criticism upon certain ideals of asceticism then prevalent. To us now, to whom enforced celibacy is so rarely a necessity, the problem seems so slight a one, so far removed from ordinary thought, that the doctrine of the book becomes of little consequence when set in contrast of comparison with the art of the book. Yet I think Charles Reade wrote it inspired by a purpose. Possibly he builded better than he knew. Certainly the work is his greatest work, and it is that one of his works which is least combative in tone and least definitely written toward a purpose. Possibly the spirit of the mediæval time in the days of the twilight of the Middle Ages softened the furious zeal of Charles Reade himself as he wrote of it. Possibly his own story of the gradual transformation of the love of Gerard and Margaret

into completest abnegation influenced Reade himself, so that he, the victim of a cloister, found a higher solution of his problem than the one which his first zeal suggested. Possibly all this is true; certain it is that it is his greatest novel, and it is the one which is, all things considered, least a novel of purpose.

Yet his other novels were at first more successful. He wrote two—"Hard Cash" and "Put Yourself in His Place"—vigorous enough in their purposeful motives to claim record here. "Hard Cash" was published in 1863. It is the most severe, relentless, inspiring exposition of the potentiality of oppression which may exist in a private lunatic asylum that has ever been written. It ended the irresponsible private asylum in England, and it made the treatment of the insane by severity well-nigh an impossibility in any asylum, public or private. Seven years after, Charles Reade, at fifty-six, wrote "Put Yourself in His Place," his last novel of purpose. We are in the habit, I think, of considering it as an arraignment of trade-unions; and it is true that some of the cowardly and inhuman methods

which some English trade-unions have on particular occasions resorted to are shown forth in its pages. But its purpose seems to me larger than that of the presentation of the evils of any specific method. In it Charles Reade, the born combatant, deprecates the combative spirit. In it the fighter of a generation pleads for sympathy of capital with labor. It is too early yet to estimate its influence. Probably it never was so direct and definite a force as "Hard Cash" and "Never Too Late to Mend." The years since the fifties have brought other changes than the material ones which come so constantly before our notice. In these somewhat later days downrightness of solution of a problem is apt to be tempered with a certain cautiousness of statement. The questions do not seem to be so simple as they appeared in the days of the Chartist. To Charles Kingsley in 1848, it seemed that half a dozen political reforms would end the miseries of the working-man. But we have all those reforms now; and yet the problems of labor and of life are more, rather than less, perplexing. So we are apt now to turn away from

the quick and absolute solution ; so the down-right, categoric answer to the problem of life satisfies us less and less easily. This generation prefers the method of a Dean Stanley to that of a Charles Kingsley, and the method of a Bryce to that of a Charles Reade. It may be that the best day of the method had passed when "Put Yourself in His Place" was written. It is true that its direct influence is not easily to be traced. But as a whole the three novels we have named were works of force and of effectiveness ; and Reade, the strenuous, will undoubtedly be remembered as one of the moving influences of his day.

There are two groups of purpose-novels of the same period as those heretofore discussed, and one small group of much later date that may properly claim our attention for a moment. The first group is composed of portions of several novels of Dickens : "Martin Chuzzlewit," "Nicholas Nickleby," and "Bleak House," which are definite enough in suggestions for the reform of boys' schools, of courts of law, of asylums, and of social abuses, to warrant mention in this list of novels of purpose. If I

do not now discuss these at length, it is rather because they are so familiar as not to need mention, than because they do not properly stand in the list of works we are considering. It may be truly said of them that, while the purposeful intention is marked, it is yet shown only in certain portions of each of the works rather than in the complete and entire design of the whole. Yet I doubt if it can be truly said that these purpose-episodes weaken the works as effective novels, however much we may wish to quarrel with them on purely artistic grounds. Certainly, one cannot skip these episodes or chapters, even now, in reading the novels. Beyond a doubt they had influence in effecting reform; they are indeed as truly a part of the history of certain reforms as they are a part of the history of the novel of purpose. The second group consists of two works, the "Man and Wife" of Wilkie Collins and the "Hannah" of Mrs. Dinah Mulock Craik. These works are clearly intended to set forth the difficulties of the marriage laws, "Man and Wife" being specifically directed against the Scotch common law marriage, and

“Hannah” being a presentation of the “deceased wife’s sister” marriage difficulty. I think it will be urged that these novels are not of a high order of literary excellence; it is certainly difficult, also, to trace the influence they exerted upon public sentiment respecting the alleged evils of which they treated; and I therefore dismiss them with this brief mention. The third group is made up of certain recent novels, dealing with vexed theological questions, or making studies of racial, political, or sociological conditions. If I pass these with little comment, it is partly because they are too recent for unbiassed study, and partly because they are rather novels of problem than novels of purpose. They are rather studious than dogmatic; rather inquiries than sermons. They seem to be more akin to records of investigations, to studies in search of a remedy, than are any of the earlier works. To discuss them would lead us too far from the subject, for they are purposeful novels rather than novels of purpose.

So much, then, of description. It seems

clear that if we confine ourselves to works of an established reputation, we can find in the whole range of English literature something less than a score of novels of purpose ; that we shall find them to have been written in a definitely defined period,—the class appearing about the middle of this century, characteristic of its third quarter, not specially in evidence in the final years of the century ; that we shall find the group to be a small one, in manner a limited one, showing no great evidence of continuity and permanence of form. Yet it will not do to dismiss this group of novels with a word of patronizing depreciation. These novels are too forceful, too strong, too important historically, to be left to pass with a slighting reference. Whatever we may say as to the artistic rank, theoretically, of novels of purpose, these novels belong in the record of the history of the novel, and any theory of novel-construction which takes no account of them is incomplete.

But in studying these novels three things have been forced upon my notice. In the first place, these novels, great as they are,

have been out-passed in almost every instance by some greater work of the same author. "Uncle Tom's Cabin" is probably Mrs. Stowe's greatest work, though "The Minister's Wooing" is of equal artistic rank in the opinion of some critics. But aside from "Uncle Tom's Cabin," there is no one, I think, of the distinctly purpose-novels which ranks as the best of its author's productions. We do not remember Turgénieff so much for his "Annals of a Sportsman" as for his "Fathers and Sons," or his "Virgin Soil"; it is not the "Hannah" of Mrs. Dinah Mulock Craik which is the masterpiece, but the "John Halifax"; it is to "Cranford" rather than to "Mary Barton" that Mrs. Gaskell will look for immortality; it is hardly "Felix Holt" or the suggestions of purpose in "Daniel Deronda" that we recall when the name of George Eliot comes into our mind, but rather "Middlemarch," "Mill on the Floss," "Adam Bede"; it is not, I think, the purpose-episodes in the novels of Dickens that are the strongest pages; it is the "Moonstone" or the "Woman in White," rather than "Man and Wife" that will

give Wilkie Collins enduring fame; Charles Reade will be remembered rather for the "Cloister and the Hearth," than for "Never Too Late to Mend"; the masterpiece of Charles Kingsley is not "Alton Locke," but "Hypatia." It appears that the novel of purpose is difficult; even the master cannot frame out of such material his greatest work. It is fused out of refractory material into such unity as it gets. In the second place, it seems that almost without exception these novels are compelled by great emotional arousal. It was an aroused American people that laid its compelling hand on Mrs. Stowe; it was an aroused working-class, thronging to meetings, hot with fierce desire, that laid a compelling hand on Charles Kingsley. The novel of purpose is fused into unity out of these refractory materials only by the heat of emotion. In the third place, it appears that the great novel of definite purpose is not only compelled by the emotion of the day, it is written out of the hot emotion of the writer. Indeed, it often is written in the day of his emotional life rather than in the day of his artistic ma.

turity. It appeared as we went through the list of these books that many of them were the earlier works of their writers. "Alton Locke" precedes "Hypatia"; "Annals of a Sportsman" precedes "Fathers and Sons"; "Mary Barton" precedes "Cranford"; "Never Too Late to Mend" precedes the "Cloister and the Hearth." The great novel of purpose is written out of the hot heat of emotion, in a day of emotion; it demands much of writer, it demands much of reader. It may be that its apparent decadence is due to the fact that it is too difficult a form rather than too inartistic a method.

Yet I have said its "apparent" decadence advisedly, for, however appearances may seem to indicate that the novel of purpose is gone, however few complete examples of such type can be found at the present day, it is not quite safe to predict the passing of the purpose novel. Certainly, it will not be *a priori* probable that this form of novel should pass, for this century grows more, rather than less, purposeful. It is a day of rapid accomplishment; it is a day of purpose in action. The progress of

political and social events is a daily ethical lesson. No more can the artist than the statesman be for a long period simply the idle singer of an empty day. It is of days gone by and not of the passing hours that Matthew Arnold sings: —

“In summer on the highlands
The Baltic sea along,
Sits Neckan with his harp of gold
And sings his plaintive song.”

To-day our dramas are subjective, our novels are introspective. We consider, study, and reflect; we do not idly dream on summer banks our leisure days away. So, in theory, it is not in accordance with the habit of the time that purpose should pass out of novels, nor is it in accordance with what we have observed of the history of the novel that the purposeful type should pass away. For we have found that the novel continues growing in seriousness, in regard for its own construction, in regard for truthfulness, in regard for relation to life, in regard for completeness of representation. If it depicts life, we shall expect it to have regard also to that three-quarters of life

which is called conduct. That the novel of purpose should disappear is theoretically improbable, if not impossible.

And so it would be improbable, if not impossible, if each step in an evolution were an end, and each form of apparent completeness were a final form. But this study of certain phases of the novel has shown continually the passing from one method of expression to a later and a completer. In the first chapter I tried to show that there was one law of development which seemed to apply with especial definiteness to the novel. The procedure seemed to be from the body to the soul; from the depiction of the external fact to the searching out of the internal relation; from the expression of power to the secret of power; from the application of external remedy to the searching out of the hidden cause. In the novel of social life, we found that the novel went from the depiction of the personage to the setting forth of character; from the mere outlining of a figure in action to the presenting of individuality or of personality; from the *Vicar of Wakefield* to *Hester Prynne*. In the historical

novel we went from the description of movement, from the rush, the action, the circumstance, to the presentation of that soul struggle which inspired or made important the outward action ; from the "Kenilworth" to the "Henry Esmond." In the romantic novel, we found development, from the stories of external adventure—improbable, unreasonable, unearthly—to the exploration—eager, intense, searching—of the human soul; from Walpole's "Castle of Otranto" to Hugo's "Notre Dame." In all we found one trend of development—from the body to the soul. So it may be that the novel of purpose has not passed, but that it is with us in completer form in the novel of problem, in the novel which does not set forth a specific remedy, but which searches for the hidden disease. It is not that the notion of relief is gone; it is not that the interest in the difficulties of life is gone; it is rather that the insistence upon a specified and particular form of cure seems to the artist crude, and that the novel has gone on past the practitioner's dealing of specific doses to the scientist's investigation of the problems of life. So, where a

Charles Reade or a Kingsley had a patent remedy for a social evil, a Mrs. Ward or a Tolstoi gives us the record of a search for a remedy. The purpose is no longer crudely in the novel, it is in every word of the author. The novel has gone down deeper into the problem. It is searching out the hidden ills of life; it is feeling earnestly for, rather than rashly prescribing, a cure. If the novel of purpose has passed, the purposeful novel has come. The novel of the future may not be the novel of purpose. But the novel of the future will be written out of soul travail; it will be hot with aroused and compelling emotion; it will be toward a purpose because it will be the work of a purposeful man.

CHAPTER VI

THE MODERN NOVEL AND ITS MISSION

IT is in a specific sense that I shall use the term *modern* in writing of the modern novel and its mission. All novels are modern ; hardly a score of really important examples antedate the present century. We look back only to 1720 and 1726 when we look at "Robinson Crusoe" and "Gulliver's Travels," the forerunners of the true novel. We look back only one hundred and fifty years to 1740, 1748, 1749, and 1759 when we search for the first real English novels,—the "Pamela" of Richardson, the "Roderick Random" of Smollett, the "Tom Jones" of Fielding, and the "Tristram Shandy" of Sterne. The fact of the novel is a modern fact.

But more than this, as we have seen before, the conditions necessary for and consonant with the production of the novel are modern

conditions. The rigid distinction between truth and fiction in narration is a modern notion ; in Shakespeare's day the "History" of Holinshed was in many places as fictitious as the romance of "Arcadia." The notion of plot as an articulation of actions, incidents, and thoughts into such a connected whole as shall present a nucleus of action, character, or emotion, is a modern notion in fiction ; and this notion of plot is at the basis of the construction of the novel. The assertion of individuality in private life as a thing of importance and value is a modern notion ; and this assertion of individuality as a thing of importance and value is an assertion underlying the novel. In theory as well as in fact, the novel belongs to modern life. It could not have existed before the Reformation ; it could not have flourished greatly had not absolute monarchies given place to sovereignty of the people. The utterance of the novel is of the modern day, and is the voice of modernness by its very nature.

It is, therefore, in a special and technical, rather than in a general, sense that I use the

term *modern*. I mean by it not only the later novel, the novel which appears to-day, but also the novel which speaks of and speaks for the life of to-day — the novel of this generation, which speaks of and speaks for men now living. Concerning this modern novel I wish to ask the questions: What mission has it? In the literature of the hour what place has this novel; in the utterance of the day, what relative importance is to be given to this specific form of expression; in the literature of the future, what special claim can this form make to recognition? I shall answer these questions by a consideration: of the means by which the novel has obtained its present vogue; of the relation in which it now stands to other forms of utterance; of its specific claims to eminence; of the tendencies markedly shown in it; and of its opportunity.

And first then: How has the novel obtained its present vogue? Certainly the slightest study of past conditions shows that the novel has fought its way against a prejudice. It is but a few years since apologies for putting this or that study of life into the form of

a novel have disappeared from the prefaces. It is but a generation since clergymen advised their peoples against the reading of novels, and since the writing of a novel by an eminent clergyman of Brooklyn startled many earnest men. The novel has worked its way through the prejudices of booksellers as well as of the public. It has pushed itself up into recognition against a steady prejudice. It has so pushed itself up that a clergyman leaves the ministry to take up the profession of a writer of fiction without our feeling that he is necessarily thereby lessening his power for good; and a novelist does not surprise us, even if he does not convince us, when he maintains that the novel is the most powerful ethical teacher of the day.

It is to be noted, again, that the novel has made its way, not only against a prejudice, but entirely without external assistance. Other forms of literature have come into existence under patronage. The drama in Greece was fostered by state patronage, as the opera is to-day in European countries. The troubadours and the trouvères, maintained by the

favor of the courts, sung the ballads. The epics which have come down to us voiced a nation's glory and were fostered by a nation's pride. But no paid poets have made the novel; no nation's pride has been appealed to by the novel. No patronage of state or court has ever fostered it. It has not even had the assistance of a special form of utterance, as had the drama, as had the epic, as had the lyric romance. It has pushed itself quietly, against a prejudice, telling a plain tale in plain prose.

And it is to be noted further that the novel has made its way against a prejudice and without assistance while speaking of things themselves apparently of minor import. The great dramas, the great romances, the great epics, have told us the deeds, the actions, of great men, of kings, of princes; or of great eras in a nation's history; or of great crises in a nation's life. The message that they bring gains some importance because connected with great events. But the novel rarely deals with kings and queens; perhaps a novel never could be written concerning itself with the love affairs of any existing monarchs: the

novel deals with matters apparently of lesser import, with matters belonging to a private individual, belonging to domestic life, belonging to the lighter and more trifling uses of the life of an individual.

In the fourth place, the novel has made its way in a large measure by an assertion of the superiority of that which is apparently a weaker and a lesser part of life, namely, emotion. For the novel does not stand in literary history as a record of achievement. It stands as a record of emotion. Yet in political and social history the things we have been accustomed to think the great things are the things that have been achieved. We admire the man of achievement. We respect the nations who have achieved. The records of achievement and the portrayal of achievement might be expected to hold first and final place. But the novel passes by these to assert, apparently, that the important time of life is not the time of action but the time of emotion ; that love, not achievement, is the important thing in living. It seems to put emphasis on that which we should at first say was the less impor-

tant thing of life; to depict the occurrences of that which we should say was the less important period of life; and to urge us to accept a lesser portrayal in place of a greater one.

So the novel has pushed its way, against a prejudice, without a helper, without the attraction of great subject, and against our first notion of fitness of treatment; it has pushed itself forward into an assertion of a great principle. It has made its way into the assertion that emotion, that love, is the fit copartner of high action. The novel depicts love and life. And it depicts the time of love in a life, the emotional day, the aroused interest, as the time, the day, the interest, most important. It asserts that the emotional period in life is the great period of life. Not at all in the high sense in which the Scriptures say that "God is love," but in a lower fashion, not less earnest, the novel says that life is love, and that life without desire so high and so intense as to claim the name of love is no true life.

Such have been the means by which the

novel has come to its present vogue. As we glance through them they seem to be the methods by which permanent things grow. It has seemed to be true in the history of development that permanent things come quietly and slowly into the assertion of a right to life. This has been the history of the progress of the novel. It seems to be the method of a development into a permanent form. There is some reason for the expectation that the form which comes in such a manner will be potent as well as permanent.

In what relation, then, does the novel now stand to other forms of utterance? In the study of literary history we can easily find evidence that the novel has supplanted some forms of literature and has surpassed others. As a matter of fact it has supplanted two great forms of literature,—the epic and the romance; it has surpassed three great forms of literature,—the drama, lyric poetry, the essay. If we look at the literature of this nineteenth century we look in vain for a great epic poem, and yet the epic form is one of the earliest forms, and one of the greatest forms,

of poetical expression. In literature there is no great nation which has not had its epic. In Hindoo literature, the *Rāmāyana* and the *Mahā-bhāratā*; in Persian, the *Shah-nameh*, Firdusi's great epic of the kings; in Finnish literature, the *Kalevala*, from which Longfellow took his "Hiawatha" motive and metre; in Portuguese, the *Os Lusiadas*; in Spanish literature, the *Cid*; in Italian literature, the *Orlando Furioso* and the *Gerusalemme Liberata*; in English literature, the "Beowulf" and the "Paradise Lost." One needs not to recount them all to prove what a great vehicle of expression has been the epic in the past. It has been not only the expression of the actions of a people; it has been the expression of the emotion of an age. If we go back to a single period in German literary history, to the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, we find those two great epics of the people, the *Nibelungenlied* and the *Gudrun*, classics to-day because they voiced the emotion of a nation. And the same period gives us the *Rolandslied* of Priest Konrad, the *Ereck* and *Der arme Heinrich* of Hartmann von Aue, the

Tristan of Gottfried von Strassburg, and the *Parzival* of Wolfram von Eschenbach. In mediæval history, in ancient history, in the literary history of past peoples, the epic has had a notable place. But as compared with the novel the epic does not exist to-day. The last great English epics were the "Paradise Lost" in poetry, and Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress" in prose. And the epical poems of to-day,—Longfellow's "Golden Legend," Matthew Arnold's "Tristan and Iseult," Morris's "Lovers of Gudrun" and "Sigurd the Volsung," Tennyson's "The Last Tournament," Wagner's epical dramas of *Tristan und Isolde*, and *Parzival*,—all these look back to this German mediæval source for their inspiration, their spirit, and their potency. The epic is of the past and the novel is of the present.

And equally true is it that the novel has succeeded to, and perhaps in some real sense supplanted, another great form of literary expression,—the romance. We sometimes look to the romance as the direct forerunner of the novel; and it is true that a certain line of analogy between the method of the romance

and the method of the novel can be drawn. But it is rather true that the novel has succeeded to, and has supplanted, the romance, than that it has developed out of the romance. In thus succeeding to and supplanting, it has outpassed a very great form of literary expression. I need not recount the whole story of the romance. It will serve to run over briefly the titles of the romances of a single period and a single nation,—the mediæval period of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and the French nation. We recall the romances of chivalry : the *Chanson de Roland*, the *Amis et Amiles*, and the hundreds of others published in the *Bibliothèque des Romans*; the classical romances—the *Chanson d'Alexandre*, the *Roman de Troie*, the *Roman d'Enéas*; the fables, the great romance of “Reynard the Fox”; and finally the Arthurian romances of Arthur, of the Holy Grail, of Lancelot, of the Round Table, given down to us through the Welsh, and through our own English Malory and our own English Tennyson, but looking back to this one period of French history for their inspiration and their origin.

Evidently the romance has been a great form of literary expression. But in this extended form the romance is of the past; the novel is of the present.

These two forms of literary expression the novel seems to have succeeded to, if not supplanted. In the present day it surpasses three other forms,—the drama, poetry, the essay. Not indeed in the same sense can it be true of the drama as of the epic and of the romance that the novel has supplanted it; for the drama is an eternal form of expression. The prediction might easily be made that a new drama may arise which shall far outweigh in power and usefulness any such form as the novel. And yet it is certainly true that, taking the literature of to-day as it stands, weighing usefulness against usefulness, the novel is at the moment more potent than the drama. The great messages, the great problems, are not to-day voiced in the drama. If we compare this era with the age of excellence of Greek literature, not alone with the day when Sophocles, and Æschylus, and Euripides, and

Aristophanes were writing hundreds of dramas of such literary excellence that their survival is a literary monument, but with any age of Greek literature; if we compare the dramatic literature of to-day, not alone with the dramatic literature of the great Elizabethan period, but even with any age of English literature,—we shall, I think, find the contemporary drama less potent as a literary vehicle than its predecessors. The novel seems to have surpassed the drama, though we may hope it never will supplant it.

The novel seems also to have surpassed poetry. It is to be deplored, I should maintain, if it be really true, that the novel has permanently supplanted poetry. But looking at literature at the moment, it would seem that the literary men and still more the literary women, of to-day are novelists rather than poets. If we glance at the list of literary men now writing, we seem to find that the great poets of a generation ago have passed and have left few successors. Longfellow, Lowell, Whittier, in America; Matthew Arnold, Browning, Tennyson, in England, the poets

of a generation ago, are dead, and few poets of the present day are successors. It would appear that the poets were of the generation past, and the novelists of the generation present. The immediate hour would seem to belong to the novelist rather than to the poet.

And, finally, the novel has outpassed its brother of equal age, the essay. Space for space, interest for interest, influence for influence, a candid observer must recognize that superiority at the present day rests with the novel rather than the essay.

As a matter of fact, then, it appears that the novel, having supplanted two great forms of utterance, and having surpassed three great forms of utterance, holds the foremost position among literary methods to-day. As a matter of theory, perhaps, we may without much difficulty find reason. For the epic, we may say, belongs to a past age, and not to a present day. The epic is the recital of the deeds of a single great hero ; modern life is a life in which associations of men, complex organisms, rather than single heroes, are

potential. The epic is the recital of deeds of uncalculating achievement, of deeds undertaken without consideration of reasons, without reflection, without meditation ; modern life demands calculation, demands thought, demands consideration of adaptation of means to ends. The epic is the recital of the outward deeds of a hero, of external action, of physical prowess ; the modern hero is the hero whose victories are the victories of the soul, whose exploits are spiritual or intellectual, whose field of action is the mind. The epic is the story of single action told objectively ; the modern life is a complex life, and the telling of the story of a modern life is the setting forth of a tale of complex adjustment rather than of external prowess.

So it might easily be said that the epic belonged to past life and the novel belongs to the present. In like manner, the tale of romantic, chivalric exploration, such as is the romance, might seem out of keeping with the modern day when we have no undiscovered country, and scarce admit there may be a bourne from which a traveller may not return.

And it may be said, therefore, that the romance is properly of the past. So possibly this is the truth. At any rate the claim can be made for the novel, with how much justice I will not undertake to say, that in the greatest novels of to-day we have all the value of the epic of the time gone by, with this also as the modern note, that a hero is a hero of thought, of experience, or of emotion, rather than a hero of physical activity ; the claim can be made that we have in the novel all the value of the ancient drama, with the added excellence that the strife takes place, not on fields of physical encounter, but within the breast of the hero; and the claim can be made that we have in the modern novel all the value of exploration in the romance, with the added excellence that it is also an exploration of the undiscovered regions of the heart.

It has appeared, then, as I have run through the statement of the relative standing of the novel and of the means by which it has attained its place, that we have in the novel a form relatively important and a form which has become important by means which seem to

suggest permanence. And one may now ask the question : What special claims has this modern novel — granting that it has the field, and granting that it has fairly won the field — what special claims has it to recognition ? It is not, I think, because of any special perfection in its form that the novel claims pre-eminence in our day. For in the sense that other great methods of utterance have had it, the novel has not a specific, compelled form. The epic could have but one hero ; it could have but one single story ; it must deal with great actions ; must picture a hero performing actions without compensation, without calculation, without selfish motive. The epic could use only a stately measure ; it was a poetic form adapted to particular uses and rigid in its method ; it had limits below which it could not venture. So, also, the romance had exploration laid upon it as a duty and had a special material, a special manner. So, préeminently, the drama has had compulsions laid upon it, — a compulsion of a limit in length, of a limited number of characters, of a regard for unity of time and place and action ; it

must consist of so many words, of so many scenes, so many acts, involving about so many persons, and it could deal only with such problems as could be portrayed in action. So has lyric poetry a form fixed for it from which it can vary but slightly. But as compared with all these the novel is free, the novel is almost formless. It may be brief or it may be extended ; it may be written in high literary English, or in low Scotch dialect. It may deal with times gone by or with the commonest story of the present moment. It is not, I think, because of any specific perfection of form, of any exact delimitation of scope and field, that the novel has excellence. It is rather, I should say, because of its freedom than because of any exactness in its form that it has claims to eminence.

Nor, again, is the novel preëminent merely or mainly because it lends itself better than any other modern form to inductive presentations. True it is that modern scientific study is inductive, is experimental, is based upon comparison of experiences. And true it is that the modern scientific method has laid a heavy hand of compulsion upon the modern

literary worker. True it is that modern art work, no less than modern scientific work, must be more or less inductive and experimental in its method. All this is true, and it is also true that the novel does lend itself to inductive presentation most easily, if one compares it either with the form-bound drama, with the compelled heroism of the epic, or even with poetry. One finds opportunity in the novel for the inductive study of social and personal conditions; for the record of investigations into intellectual and family problems. Yet it would, I believe, be complimenting the modern novel too highly should one predicate such a method as universal among novelists of the day. So far as it is used it is an interesting indication of the influence of scientific work upon literary methods. But I cannot believe that it is merely or mainly because of this that the novel is preëminent to-day. As I view it, the main claim of the novel to eminence is that it is a social form of expression. The one great fact of modern life is the fact of great communities made up of individuals of diverse interests, diverse capabilities, diverse nationali-

ties; and the great problems of modern life are the social problems arising in these new, vast, complex, social organisms. It is precisely with the lighter and more external of these social problems that the novel of manners deals; it is precisely with the more incongruous of the situations occurring in these heterogeneous organizations that the humorous novel deals; it is precisely with the more personal, with the more esoteric, of these problems that the serious novel deals. The novel interests because it approaches such problems, such situations, always from the standpoint of the individual. The story underneath may be the social question, the moral question, the ethical question; on the surface it is a story of one individual with relations involving emotional arousal toward or against another individual. The novel thus is social, and modern life is social. The novel looks at the society problems on a level with them, and takes these problems as problems of actual life. Hence, we study it with sympathy and interest.[✓] A good novel is an inductive study in sociological biology.

So much may be said for the claims which the novel makes to eminence as a method of expression. But even with just claim to present usefulness, and even with a history of success in surpassing and supplanting other forms, and even with a promise of permanence from the manner of its development, the novel could hardly be urged as an important form, were it a completed form whose period of growth had stopped. If, in addition, the novel shows evidences of present vitality, and if the tendencies it manifests at the present day seem to be in the line of an ascent, confident prediction of a future period of usefulness is not hazardous. Of such promising tendencies I shall name three which seem to me important: a tendency in the novel to differentiate into special forms; a tendency toward the treatment of serious problems at once difficult and important; a tendency toward earnestness of manner. I have named three tendencies, but I might almost sum them up under one word of characterization and say that the modern novel shows a tendency to become scientific. For certain it is, as we have seen, that a heavy

hand of compulsion has been laid by science upon literature. The demand that the methods that have proved useful in scientific study shall become the methods of usefulness even in literature, in art, in poetry, is a demand not to be resisted. If the novelist is to live, seems to be the dictum of this scientific generation, the novel must become scientific, and these three tendencies seem to be the reply of the novel to this demand of science. It is in answer to such demand that the novel seems to be becoming serious in character, serious in subject, and serious in treatment.

That it has become serious in character is shown in that it has, in these later years, assumed an exactness of fidelity to type. The novels that appear to-day can be classified as novels of this or that or another specific class almost as rigidly as can works of science. In the last few years perhaps a score of novels have been temporarily famous. Any reader can make a list for himself. If he will do so I am sure that one characteristic will at once strike him. It is that each one of these novels belongs, not only to the general cate-

gory of novels, but also to a specific category of a kind of novel easily determined by the reader. Each one of these novels has a certain personality, a certain character. They are not merely love stories. The element of love as a motive is almost entirely absent in at least one-quarter, and is the dominant motive in less than one-half. The novel form seems to have obtained, or be tending toward the obtaining, of a consistent character of its own so complete that it can use other motives than a single one. The tendency is, I believe, in the modern novel toward the differentiation into specific types of expression; into the development of a novel-form as a means for presenting an illustration of a principle,—a study of a religious, or personal, or ethical, or social condition in such a fashion that the presentation shall have a distinct character of its own. If this be a true statement of the tendency of the modern novel, it indicates that it is obtaining a seriousness of character. It is obtaining it in answer to a demand from without and from within. From without, that is, from the public, because mankind demands

in anything to which it shall give recognition as a permanent form of art, that it shall show conformity to a certain type-form. We demand of our horses that they be of a particular kind or breed; we demand of our dogs that they be true to a type,—that they be setters, or pointers, or mastiffs, or beagles, or collies. So in the literary world there is a demand in respect of the novel that it be true to a type of novel; and the present tendency is in answer to such demand. The novel is assuming a specific form in answer, also, to a demand from within, from the artist himself. Because, apparently, the writer is coming to believe in this form of art. In so far as this is true, it is an indication of the development of a literary character and personality in the novel, and, so far as it goes, suggests the probability that the novel is a permanent form of literature.

The second tendency in the modern novel is toward the treatment of serious problems, at once difficult and important. For the evidence of this I ask the reader to turn back to his list of novels. If his list at all resembles

the one I have made myself, he will find that about one-third of the novels may be classed as illustrations of a principle in action, as historical romances, or as novels of character ; and in every one he will note that the central interest is upon one single figure actuated always by a daring spirit. Of the other two-thirds of these novels nearly every one will be likely to be a treatment, inductive and serious, of some ethical, personal, religious, or social problem. Now I shall not undertake to say that the ethical problem is so treated that the novel becomes a master work of ethics ; I shall not undertake to say that the personal problem is so treated that these works can be taken as great contributions to the solving of these or other personal problems ; nor shall I undertake to say that the religious problems involved or presented in these novels, or that the social problems treated in these novels, are great treatments of the problems involved. But I call attention to the fact that so many of these novels seem to undertake the treatment of the problem with an intent to give a hint of a solution and a delineation of an

ideal condition in which such problem might find solution ; and I say that it is an indication of the tendency of the novel that it attacks and does what it can toward the solving of such problems. It is a condition which seems to indicate a confidence in the usefulness of the novel as a permanent form of literature.

The third tendency which I shall note in the novel is a tendency toward earnestness of manner. It is not only true that the novel seems to be developing a personality of its own ; it is not only true that it has become serious in character ; it is not only true that it has become serious in subject,—the novel has become serious in manner. Beginning as a study of fiction, it is becoming a study of actual life. The only demand laid upon the novelist at the present day is that he tell the exact truth. If he describe, he must describe with absolute accuracy or we will have none of his novels ; if he depict a character acting out of accord with our notions of the actions of a character actuated by such motives, we deny the title of excellence to the novelist. The scientific hand is laid upon the writer

of fiction to compel him to truthfulness. It is, as we must recognize, a somewhat new demand in literature. The term *poetic license* as a phrase of condonation of the departures of literary men from truth of presentation has been familiar to us for generations. We have, until lately, expected the literary man to be free from the trammels of fidelity to the actual and the truthful. Sir Walter Scott, writing "Kenilworth," puts into his preface the statement that in the interest of an historical novel he has departed from history. In the interest of an historical play, Shakespeare, in "King John," introduces cannon a full century before such engines of war were used in England or France. In the interest of a fine poetic metaphor, Shakespeare makes Hamlet speak of that undiscovered country, that bourne from which no traveller e'er returns, when that same Hamlet had just been talking with a traveller returned from that same undiscovered country. In "King Lear" the action is placed seven centuries before Christ, yet Christian allusions abound in the play, and Kent says he is no papist; in the "Lusiads," Vasco da

Gama prays to God, and Venus answers his prayer.

The compulsion of truth was not upon the Shakespeares and the Walter Scotts. But his publishers tell us that Robert Louis Stevenson, having spoken incidentally in one of his books of gulls being on a certain island at a certain time, and having learned, after the book was in the press, that the gulls did not go to the island at that time, insisted that, at however great expense, the correction should be made. The compulsion of truth is upon the modern novelist. It is upon him in accordance with a scientific discovery,—a discovery that the lines of decorative beauty can never be out of accord with the lines of construction; that the things which make for beauty in art make for strength in construction; that there is a harmony of natural and æsthetic laws. The usefulness of beauty, the beauty of usefulness, has been taught us by science: “that which is true has in it lines of beauty, that which is beautiful has in it lines of truth,” says modern science.

The most beautiful thing in nature is the rainbow. It is pure beauty, a span projected upon evanescent cloud, resting on insubstantial air, stretching into the vagueness of the heavens. It has been a visionary hope of the dreamer to find at its base a pot of gold ; but the pot of gold was not there. It has been the hope of the artist to catch the secret of the blended splendor ; but the hope was vain. The rainbow has been the symbol of promise to the believer ; but it faded into mist and darkness almost ere one could note its presence. Of all created forms of beauty this one might well seem the most incorporeal, the most ethereal, the least practical. Yet the rainbow has become the most useful of modern scientific tools. To the solar spectrum, which is the rainbow on the scientist's dissecting table, every man of science is a debtor. The lines of truth in the spectrum are the lines of beauty in the rainbow. "That which would be beautiful," says science to art, "must first be true." "The truest verity," says this scientific age to the artist, "must coincide with the noblest imaginative

inspirations." So the scientist has compelled the literary artist to be truthful. That the writers of novels in our day have been able to accept this stern compulsion is an indication of tendency which seems to set apart the novel as an important, if not a permanent, form of literary expression.

Such is the novel to-day. In what I have said of it may be found the suggestion of the answer to my final questions : What is the opportunity of the novel ? and with such opportunity What is its mission ? Very likely, if a reader framed that list of recent successful novels and found that every one was either a romance of heroic action, or a study of some problem of personal, religious, or social action, he was ready to answer that this was an indication rather of the temper of the time than of a tendency of the novel. He was ready to say that, if the novel to-day deals with heroic lives, it deals with them because this achieving age admires heroism rather than because the novel has become heroic ; and that if the novel presents problems it is because men and women are thinking problems rather than because the

novel is, on a sudden, become serious. Had he said this it would have been the simple truth. The novel is becoming serious because this special decade is serious. The novel is dealing with problems because just now many problems of conduct—and many problems of social life—occupy the minds of men. It is depicting romantic heroism because this is an age of achievement. And herein lies the opportunity and the mission of the novel. It has the opportunity because of all forms of literature at the present time the novel is most in touch with life. When one now states the proposition that the novel, being in touch with life, has literary opportunity, it does not seem to be a particularly new or remarkable conception; yet only a generation or so ago exactly the reverse of this proposition was maintained in word or in act by most literary men. To gain the literary heavenly life one must leave the world behind, used to be an indisputable proposition of literary art. Not only did the poet claim poetic license; not only did the dramatist, the romance writer, expect to traverse be-

yond possibility, if he wished, in the interest of his art—the poet, the dramatist, the romance writer, expected to live outside of ordinary life-conditions altogether. The ordinary bonds of life, so ran the formula, were not for the man of genius. To live apart, to transcend the ordinary limitations of life, to keep separate from contact with humanity, this was expected of the literary worker. The coast of Bohemia, with its unreal sea dotted with non-existing sails, was supposed to be the proper habitat of authors. He might, if he had the genius of a Dumas, a Musset, a George Sand, a Shelley, a Byron, live outside of law. His life was not the world's life because his thoughts were not the world's thoughts. Literature was out of touch with life, and this was not so much from necessity as from desire. The literary man lived in Bohemia, no doubt often because in semi-obscurity poverty was less conspicuous; but he kept his work apart from life because his theories demanded such a separation. The actions, the struggles, the dirt and crime, the petty tragedies, the simple

experiences, the needs, the problems of the men and women about him, were not subjects for literature; for artistic material one must go beyond the actual.

But other times have come; and other precepts govern in this age. The scientific spirit and the imaginative spirit have become copartners. The novel has its opportunity because it has come to deal with the artistic possibilities in ordinary life; with the tragedies and comedies found in the joys, the aspirations, and the problems of common human mortals. The novel which began by depicting phases and conditions has come to be an interpreter of the deeper affairs of life.

It was a long time ago that Matthew Arnold said of poetry that it was a criticism of life. This is, perhaps, less true of poetry than in the year when Matthew Arnold said it; modern poetry deals with aspects of life rather than with life itself. In our day it is the novel which is the real critic of life. *In creative criticism lies the mission of the modern novel.*

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